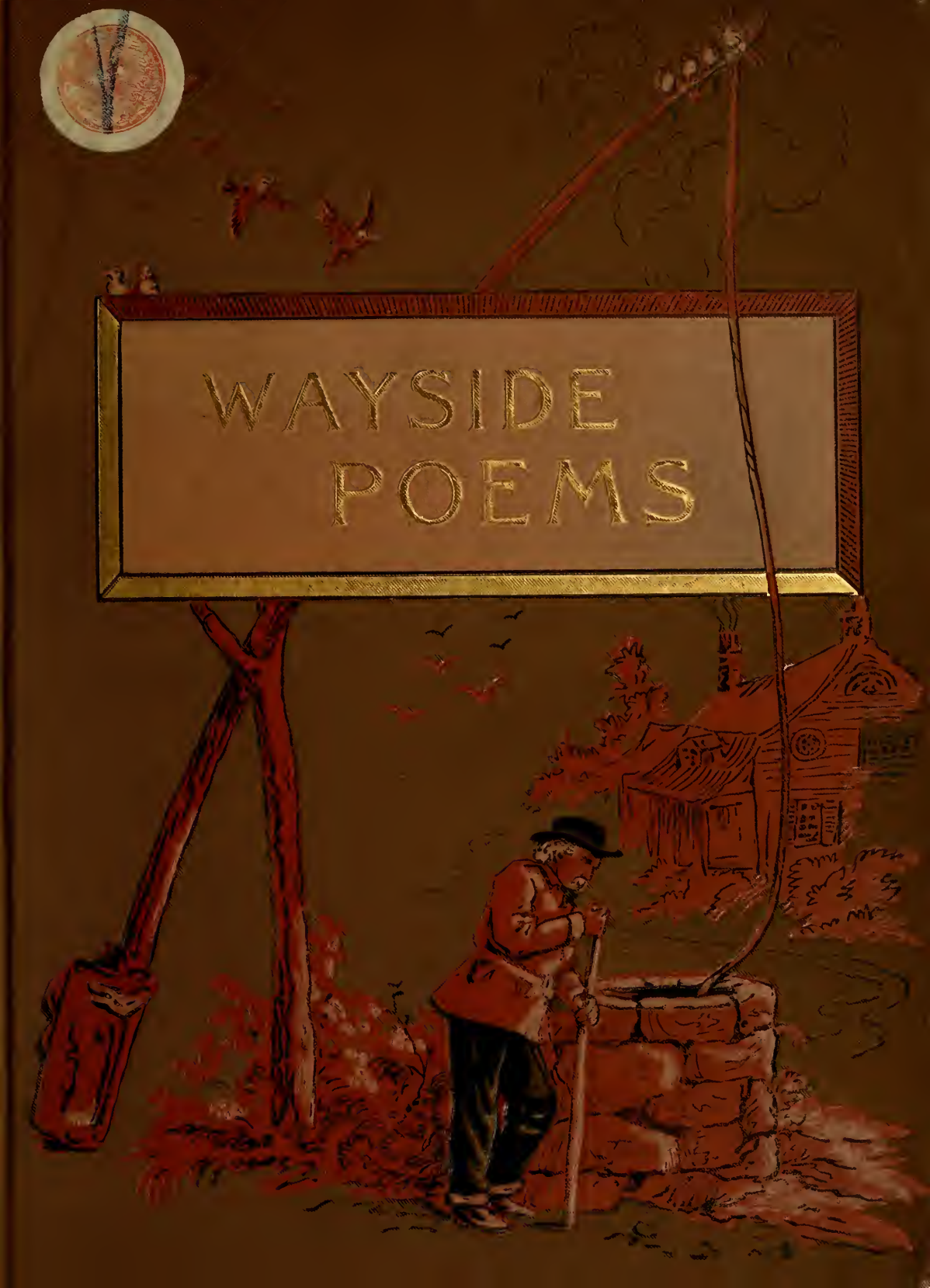
WAYSIDE
POEMS

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"'SING ME A LYRIC,' THE MAIDEN SIGHED" [*See page* 3

WAYSIDE POEMS

BY

WALLACE BRUCE

AUTHOR OF "OLD HOMESTEAD POEMS"

ILLUSTRATED

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1895

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TO HER

WHO CROWNS THESE

WAYSIDE DREAMS

WITH HAPPINESS

My Wife

THESE POEMS ARE

LOVINGLY DEDICATED

PREFACE

Once more beside the familiar well-curb and its cool-dripping bucket, after years of wandering and sojourning in many lands!

It has been the author's fortune, since the publication of his *Old Homestead Poems*, to realize an early dream — to dwell for a time in the land of his fathers, and muse amid the historic shrines of the fairest city in Europe.

The favorable reception of his first volume on both sides of the Atlantic, and of the *Clover and Heather* edition by Blackwood & Sons, of Edinburgh and London, has prompted him to present these later Verses by the Wayside.

Many are associated with happy friendships, formed during a delightful period of consular life at Edinburgh, many more with scenes and love-lit memories of our own country, with here and there a lyric-dream belonging to every land and every age.

Principal Fairbairn, of Oxford University, has kindly said that several are "fragrant of both soils," and that it was "a happy thought to wed, through Scott and Irving, the Tweed and the Hudson." To bind the world in sweeter relationship is the highest province of literature.

Born for the most part of living pictures and eventful occasions, these poems possess a personal history, notably illustrated by "The Auld Brig's Welcome" at the unveiling of the Burns Statue at Ayr, and by "Uno de Mille" on the shores of Lake Como, the incident of which was set forth in the following paragraph accompanying its publication in *Blackwood's Magazine:*

"One April day in 1890 the author saw a steamer draped in black bring home to Como for burial a soldier of the immortal One Thousand of Garibaldi. By a strange and dramatic coincidence his comrade, an eloquent scholar of Como, died a few hours later at his desk, while preparing a tribute to his memory, and on the next day his own body was borne in the opposite direction across the lake to his own kindred."

If this volume discovers new friends who might care to see what other work in this direction has been accomplished in the few leisure moments of a busy life, the author can say with unaffected modesty that it may be found in the pages of Old Homestead Poems.

W. B.

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The forests are not all felled,
Nor the flowers all swept from the sod;
And the words are not all spelled
That declare the glory of God.

WAYSIDE POEMS

ONE WORD

"Write me an epic," the warrior said—
"Victory, valor, and glory wed."

"Prithee, a ballad," exclaimed the knight—
"Prowess, adventure, and faith unite."

"An ode to freedom," the patriot cried—
"Liberty won and wrong defied."

"Give me a drama," the scholar asked—
"The inner world in the outer masked."

"Frame me a sonnet," the artist prayed—
"Power and passion in harmony played."

"Sing me a lyric," the maiden sighed—
"A lark-note waking the morning wide."

"Nay, all too long," said the busy age;
"Write me a line instead of a page."

The swift years spoke, the poet heard:
"Your poem write in a single word."

He looked in the maiden's glowing eyes,
A moment glanced at the starlit skies—

From the lights below to the lights above—
And wrote the one-word poem—Love.

LOVE'S DIAL

In hope and joy we've journeyed
O'er many a land and sea;
Love's dial marks the sunshine—
The years are twenty-three:
They seem a dream foreshortened,
An idyl sweetly told,
For every hour was silver
And every day was gold.

By many a stream we've wandered,
Through forests dim and vast,
Where far Sierra's mountains
Their westward shadows cast;
Through bright Italian cities
And dim cathedral aisle,
And realms where art and beauty
The centuries beguile;

By Scottish rills that murmur
The songs our mothers knew,
Through deep defiles still guarded
By heroes tried and true;
By burn and field and river,
O'er many a land and sea,
We've wandered on together—
The years are twenty-three.

It seems somehow a story
That hardly can be real,
Too bright and evanescent
For memory's gentlest seal;

A word, a line, a poem
  That never can be told,—
For every hour was silver,
  And every day was gold;

Or like a floating vision
  Where ripples softly break,
And idle oars lie floating
  Upon a moonlit lake;
A paradise of glory
  Where love is never old,
And every hour is silver
  And every day is gold.

And so beside Love's dial
  We note the fleeting years,
And gather in the harvest
  That grows in smiles and tears;
Then voyage on together
  Upon a wider sea;
The days are drifting leeward—
  The years are twenty-three.

THE MILKY WAY

A PERSIAN LEGEND

They lived and dreamed in silent ages past—
  Two lovers parted through long bitter years—
And died in hope. But fate, still cruel, cast
  Their future lot in far-off different spheres,
To grieve in vain, and Heaven itself was naught—
  An empty joy—for what is life at best
Till with the threads of being there is wrought
  A chord responsive to another breast?
Their spirits yearned across the chasm drear;
  An answering wish shot swift from soul to soul,
A bridge of light o'er that wide waste to rear,
  An arch of stars across the flaming scroll.
    They waited not, nor asked they God above,
    For time or space cannot dissever love.

Long æons pass, and now the narrowing zone
  Needs but one star to make the span complete;
One crowning sphere from out the living throne
  To bind the arch. Straightway archangels fleet
Sought God, and spake: "See'st Thou yon starry way
  Where spirits bold would bridge the realms of space?
Have they Thy Will with wandering spheres to play,
  And rob Thy throne presumptuous pride to grace?"
"Shall I destroy," God said, "the works of love,
  I who am Love?" In radiant glory bright
Those spirits wept with joy; around, above,
  For one sweet instant thrilled all worlds with light:—
    "The keystone take from God's eternal throne;
    The works of love abide, and they alone."

REPENTANCE

A CURSE was hurled into the air,—
  That God a brother's soul might blast.
The hot tears fell. Then rose a prayer,—
  That God might guard and keep it fast.
Swift sped the curse, but swifter far
  The white-winged prayer on mercy's breath;
While angels o'er Heaven's crystal bar
  Beheld the race of life and death.
The bat-like curse in dazzling light
  Uncertain now its journey keeps,
While up through heavenly radiance bright
  The victor prayer in triumph sweeps.
    The crystal bar wide open flies,
    The prayer is safe in Paradise;
    It closes at the angel's nod,
    The curse ne'er reached the throne of God.

OLÉ BULL'S CHRISTMAS

MY LANDLORD'S PRAIRIE STORY

Move along a trifle, stranger, just a little; don't you see
On the floor that hieroglyphic, something like a letter B?—
Right there, close to where you're standing, sort of sacred spot we keep;
And we always touch it gently when we scrub up once a week.
Recent? Yes, some time last August, but I put it in to stay;
And the yellow pine will hold it after we are laid away.
No one sets his chair upon it or he's straightway told to shove;
For the boys, you see, won't stand it; that's a plank the neighbors love.

"Somewhat of a Poets' Corner," once a high-toned traveller said;
They corrected him politely as they showed him up to bed.
He explained about an Abbey—I don't quite recall the name—
With a chapel full of dead folks that had found their way to fame.
But, they said, this is no graveyard; here's the spot where Olé stood
When he told his Christmas story right before the blazing wood.
Never heard him? Never saw him? Stranger, you don't mean to say
That you never heard the master, Olé Bull, the fiddler, play?

Talk of classic art in music! What was that to Olé Bull,
When his blood with life was tingling and his eyes were brimming full?
I have thought his heart in rapture sent its pulses all the way
Through the bit of seasoned timber that against his bosom lay;
Till the fiddle seemed a fixture, part and parcel of the man,
And the trembling strings a net-work over which his feelings ran.

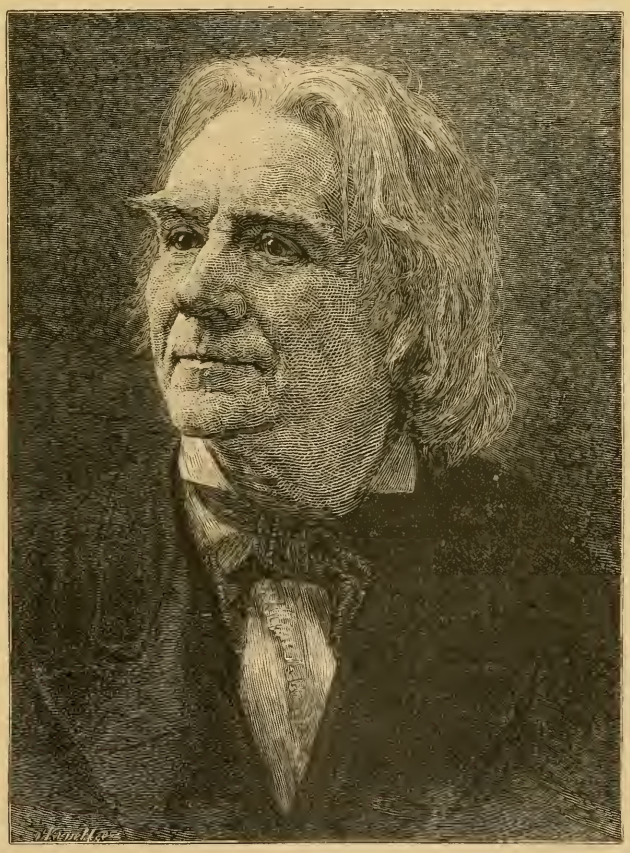
He would shake your sides with laughter, make you weep as by a look,
And between the bits of music he could talk just like a book.

Fluent speakers! We have had them, noted men from foreign parts;
But, for eloquence, I tell you, Olé held the ace of hearts.
He was not the man to filter idle jests through wabblin' lips;
Born somehow to talk all over from his toes to finger-tips:
Just a sort of natural battery, filled the room with life and joy,
Beaming face, with locks of silver, bright and chipper as a boy.
He would sit here of an evening, reeling off the slickest thread;
And the hour-hand wasn't heeded or the horses in the shed.
"Let 'em whinner," said the deacon, "they can stand it once a year;
And our wives — they don't expect us, when they know that Olé's here."

We were all a bit Norwegian, and he seemed to feel at home;
Said no hearth shone bright as this one from Christiania down to Rome.
He would tell us his adventures in those cities old and gray;
How he struggled, toiled, and suffered when he first began to play;
Of his failures and successes, praise and honor won at last,
From patrician, prince, and peasant, wheresoe'er his lot was cast;
But of all his greatest triumphs he regarded this the best,
How he won a gray-haired hermit on the prairies of the West.

It was on a Christmas evening, wellnigh fifty years ago;
None who heard him can forget it; lost in sleet and blinding snow,
Fifteen miles from any farm-house, twenty from the nearest town,
Olé Bull had missed the guide-board, for the storm had hurled it down.
Stumbling, floundering in the snow-drifts, onward pressed his noble gray,
Led by instinct and devotion; Olé let him have his way.
Many a trail they'd tried together, but he deemed this trip the last;
Horse and rider both must perish in that wild and howling blast.
Hope had died and life was ebbing, when, from out the cruel night,
Far across the fenceless prairie faintly shone a twinkling light.

Many a time I've heard him tell it, as he let his fancy play,
Till you felt the storm about you, saw the distant flickering ray;
Found your nerves and hair a-tingling, all attuned to passion's key—
There it glimmers like a light-house just above the blinding sea—
Fainter now: O bitter darkness! idle vision of the brain—
Joy! Behold the ruddy firelight streaming through the window-pane.
Steady, one more drift, my bonnie! bravely done, all danger past!
What! No word or sign of welcome! tried the door and found it fast.
Near at hand a ruined shelter, remnant of a cattle-shed;
Safe within, the gray was grateful, pawing gently to be fed.



"BEAMING FACE, WITH LOCKS OF SILVER"

Soon a lantern, then a shadow, and within the creaking door
Stood a being such as mortal never saw on earth before.
Fierce his bitter imprecation—"Get you out, whoe'er you be!
I have sealed an oath in heaven never human face to see;
Heart and soul to hate abandoned, love by cruel fortune wronged;
I've renounced for years—forever—all that to my life belonged.
Take your way! Begone! Ay, perish in yon wild demoniac yeast;
For the wrongs that I have suffered I will have revenge at least."
"Fiend or madman!" Olé answered, seized his shoulder in a trice,
Led him straight into the cabin, for his grip was like a vise;
"I am here to stay till daylight, asking neither food nor grace;
Sit you there within the shadow; and I charge you keep your place."

Hour by hour went by in silence, till the hermit, crooning low,
Took a fiddle from his cupboard, woke the airs of long ago.
Ole, wondering, looked and listened. Though his touch showed little art,
He could feel the deeper music sweetly welling from the heart,
All perhaps to him remaining of a brighter, happier morn,
Ere his heart became a desert, and his curse was yet unborn.
Long he played the old-time music, as unconscious of his guest;
Then with cold and feigned politeness turned and spake in bitter jest;
In a tone of well-bred irony, telling of a better day,
"Will the stranger who is with us lay aside his cloak and play?"

Olé rose and took that fiddle; said he never felt before
All the conscious power within him as, upon that cabin floor,
Saw in vision panoramic circling galleries of acclaim,
With the flush of joy ecstatic and with beauty's light aflame;
Felt the glowing tide of transport swelling from a thousand hearts,
And the thrill of deep emotion when the tear in rapture starts;
Ah, but that was gilded pageant, this was more than stately dome—
To a lonely heart in exile he is playing "Home, Sweet Home."

Nearer still and ever nearer, all entranced the hermit drew,
Gazed with open eyes of wonder through his lashes wet with dew;
Thought his midnight guest an angel come unto him unawares,
As the music softly stealing brought again his mother's prayers.

Long-pent tears, their barriers bursting, coursed his careworn furrows
free,
In that far-off, storm-swept prairie, where God's eye alone might see:
Desolate his heart and harder than the rock by Judah's fold,
Smote by Olé's rod of magic, woke like Meribah of old.
Miracle of love eternal! Ever still life's mystic bowl,
Touched by human kindness, bubbles in the desert of the soul.

So, ere morning dawned, like brothers he and Olé side by side
Shared the narrow cot between them, made by faith and friendship
wide.
"Saved, ay, saved!" the hermit murmured, "I have found my life
again;
Learned a truer, deeper meaning in the words, my 'fellow-men.'"
Then they took their way together when the storm was overpast;
In the crowded city parted, journeying on to meet—at last.

This was Olé's favorite story, which he told us standing here,
With the fire-glow streaming o'er him—so the spot, you see, is dear;
And, at evening in the winter, when I hear the village bell,
Olé's music floats about me, all the room seems in a spell;
And again I hear him saying, "That one hermit to enthrall
Stands among my proudest triumphs, sweetest, grandest of them all."

IMPERIAL TIME

Imperial Time, that neither hastes nor waits,
  First-born of Him who wrought creation fair,
In glory throned at Morning's golden gates,
  Ere Light was spoken to the wondering air;
Great chronicler of silent ages vast,
  Forgetting naught though centuries glide away;
The sifted star-dust on thy pages cast
  Obscures no record of thine earlier day:
Viceroy supreme beyond the farthest bound
  Where human sobs in pallid echoes die,
Within whose soul no pitying throb is found,
  Whose only tears are meteors of the sky;
    Monarch and viceroy, chronicler sublime,
    But mortal still, a shadow's shadow—Time!

DESTINY

I WANDERED down a brooklet bubbling bright,
Which slowly widened gliding towards the sea;
A leaf aglow with Autumn's golden light
From restful bough was nodding dreamily.

"I WANDERED DOWN A BROOKLET BUBBLING BRIGHT"

Midway it hung, but, as my lifted hand
  Would pluck its beauty from the listless bough,
A laughing breeze, so light it scarcely fanned
  The unkempt silver of the poplar's brow,
Bore it across. I followed in my quest,
  And down the bank upon the farther side
I journeyed on into the purpling west—
  The brooklet, now a river deep and wide,
    No more to be recrossed, it might not be—
    A drifting leaf—and yet my soul was free.

ENVIRONMENT

If the seed had not dropped,
  Or the tree had not grown,
If the frost had not nipped,
  Or the leaf had not blown;
Had it not drifted over
  The moment I passed,
If the stream had been wider
  Its beauty that glassed!

Did the leaf know His will? —
  Too tangled the skein;
Did I wander unguided?—
  The question is vain.
Be it Fate or Free Will,
  What matter to me;
Either side of the river
  Leads down to the sea.

THE FLOWER-KEY

A FAIRY princess wandered when a child,
From jewelled halls beneath the ocean's bound,
Up to the world, where rocks in ruin piled
Behind her footsteps closed with hapless sound;
In vain with feeble arm and tiny hand
She sought return; then sank in blinding tears,
Till came a noble queen with stately band
To give her shelter and to calm her fears:
But still she sighed and never might forget
The sylphid streams where shadows never stray;
While at her wish ten thousand heroes met
And wrought with will to find her homeward way—
A fruitless task, a kingdom's force was spent,
The rock by mortal strength could not be rent.

She came and went, but oft in bitter grief
Bemoaned her fate beside the cruel door—
"The Power that guards to every prayer is deaf,
The princely palace closed forevermore!
The fair enchanted grottos where I strayed
In golden hours, would they again were mine!
My sisters dear with whom I fondly played
When days were bright, what memories enshrine!
Long weary years my patient footsteps press
The ruthless threshold that I know full well;
No answer comes my sorrowing soul to bless,
No genii wait to break the magic spell,
Yon heartless crag returns my anxious cry—
'Alas! alas!' the listening glens reply."

"What flower is that thou bearest in thine hand?"
A hermit said, who heard the sad refrain;
"I've wandered wide in many a distant land,
And know full well that human works are vain."
The Princess answered: "Symbol dear to me—
A primrose pale." "Then be not thus bereft;
In other realms 'tis known as Mary's key:
Touch thou with it." The rock in silence cleft.
The door swung wide on massive hinges wrought,
The key of flowers had touched the hidden ward:—
A gleam of light with glory strangely fraught,
A strain of joy upborne in sweet accord.
The hermit picked the fallen primrose there;
The door had closed. Alone he bows in prayer.

NIAGARA

Proud swaying pendant of a crystal chain,
On fair Columbia's rich and bounteous breast,
With beaded lakes that necklace-like retain
Heaven's stainless blue with golden sunlight blest!
What other land can boast a gem so bright!
With colors born of sun and driven spray—
A brooch of glory, amulet of might,
Where all the irised beauties softly stray.
Ay, more—God's living voice, Niagara, thou!
Proclaiming wide the anthem of the free;
The starry sky the crown upon thy brow,
Thy ceaseless chant a song of Liberty.
But this thy birthright, this thy sweetest dower,
Yon arching rainbow—Love still spanning Power.

"PROUD SWAYING PENDANT"

ALPINE SPRING

TO MY MOTHER, MARY ANN MacALPINE BRUCE

Dedicated at De Funiak Springs, Florida.

I know the mountain brooklets in the pass of wild Glencoe,
Where waved the MacAlpine standard a thousand years ago.
I have heard the pibroch sounding by stream and wooded fell,
And lingered in the gloaming beside St. Ronan's Well.

I know the homestead fountain, where the waters bubble bright,
Beneath the oak and maple aglow with golden light;
I listen to the music of the gurgling sylvan rill,
And the gentle, mellow cadence of the wondering whippoorwill.

I wander down the footpath, in memory here to-day,
With my mother to that springside in the hills so far away;
I hear the old-time stories, kneel again beside her knee,
And the woodland's murmuring music through the twilight speaks to me.

With a love that knows no distance, though deep shadows intervene,
Leading back the weary wanderer through the meadows fair and green,
With a love that lifts her rainbow, though the skies be dark above—
Sunshine from a sphere immortal, born of heaven—a mother's love.

In the glory of this sunshine we have come in gladness now,
In the light that veils her presence, reverent with uncovered brow;
Here beside the gentle music of fair waters flowing free—
Alpine Spring, my sainted mother, consecrates its heart to thee.

Come, then, children, free and happy, for her laugh was light as
yours;
Come, fair youth, with golden promise that abideth and endures;
Come, fond age, that now is waiting for the bliss that she hath won;
Welcome to the Alpine fountain while its waters greet the sun.

"I WANDER DOWN THE FOOTPATH, IN MEMORY HERE TO-DAY"

INCH-CAILLIACH, LOCH LOMOND

(The island burial-place of Clan-Alpine, resembling, from Rossdhu, a reclining body with folded arms)

No more Clan-Alpine's pibroch wakes
Loch Lomond's hills and waters blue;
"Hail to the Chief" no longer breaks
The quiet sleep of Roderick Dhu:
Enwrapped in peace the islands gleam
Like emerald gems in sapphire set,
And, far away, as in a dream,
Float purple fields where heroes met.

Inch-Cailliach—island of the blest!
Columba's daughter, passing fair,
With folded arms upon her breast,
Rests soft in sunset radiance there;
A vision sweet of fond Elaine,
And floating barge of Camelot,
Upon her brow no trace of pain,
And on her heart "Forget me not."

Forget thee, saintly guardian? Nay,
From distant lands across the sea
To this lone isle I fondly stray
With song and garland fresh for thee;
I trace the old inscriptions dear,
Fast fading now from mortal ken,
And through the silvered lichens peer
To read MacAlpine's name again.

My mother's name, a sacred link
That binds me to the storied past;
A rainbow bridge from brink to brink,
Which spans with light the centuries vast.
Two hundred years! Clan-Alpine's pine
Has struck its roots in other lands;
My pulses thrill to trace the sign
And touch the cross with reverent hands.

All ruin here!—the shrine is dust,
The chapel wall a shapeless mound;
But nature guards with loving trust,
And ivy twines her tendrils round
The simple slab, sublimer far
Than gilded dome for Scotia's line;
The open sky and northern star
Befit the chieftains of the pine.

The light streams out from fair Rossdhu
Across the golden-tinted wave;
That crumbling keep, that ancient yew,
Still mark a worthy foeman's grave;
But warm the hearts that now await
Our coming at the open door,
With love and friendship at the gate,
And beacon-lights along the shore.

Dear Scotia! ever yet more dear
To loyal sons in every land;
Strong in a race that knew not fear,
And for man's freedom dared to stand;
Ay, dearer for thy songs that float
Like thistle-down o'er land and sea,
And strike the universal note
Of love and faith and liberty.

"THE AULD BRIG HAILS WI' HEARTY CHEER"

THE AULD BRIG'S WELCOME

(*Delivered at the unveiling of the Burns Statue, Ayr, July* 8, 1891)

The Auld Brig hails wi' hearty cheer—
Uncover, lads, for Burns is here!
The bard who links us all to fame,
And blends his own with Scotia's name.

Seven hundred years the winding Ayr
Has glassed my floating image there;
I've seen long centuries glide away,
But Robin brought our blithest day.

I heard the Thirteenth's warlike peal
Wake serried ranks of glinting steel:
All wrinkled now, yet in my prime,
I wait with joy the Twentieth's chime.

I cherish weel in memory bright
The glorious deeds of Wallace wight,
And deem the very stones are blessed
Which bind the arch his feet have pressed.

I mind the time King Robert's band
With sweeping oar left Arran's strand;
The flame that lit yon Carrick hill
All round the world is shining still.

Old Coila's had her share of fame,
Her bead-roll treasures many a name;
She's had her heroes great and sma',
But Robin stands aboon them a'.

The auld clay-biggin of his birth
Becomes the shrine of all the earth;
The room where rose the Cotter's prayer
The proudest heritage of Ayr.

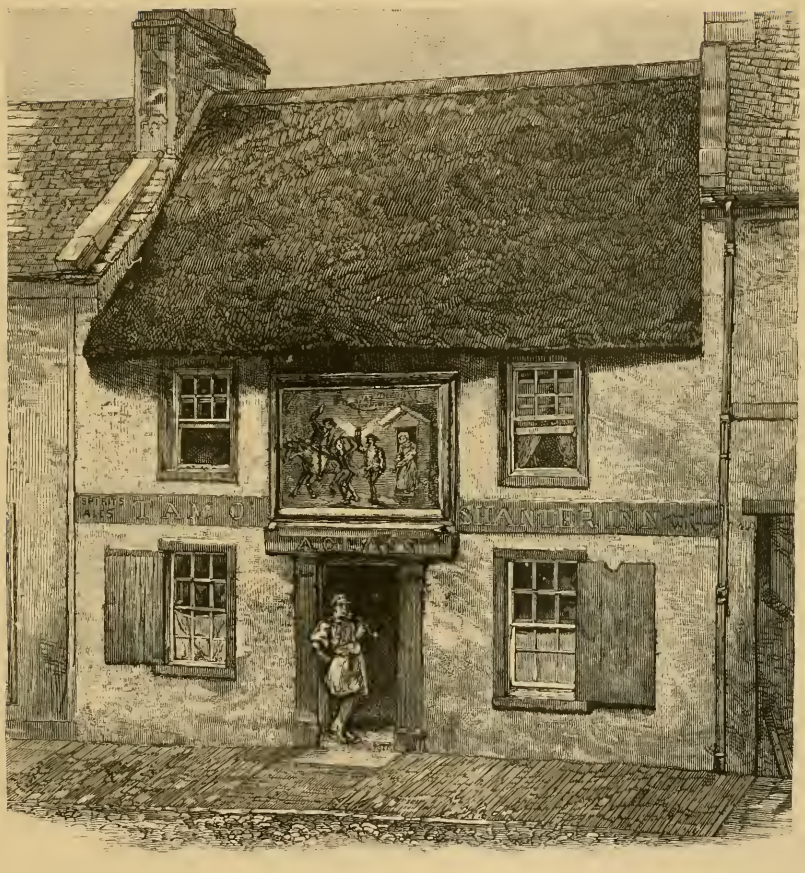
No starlit sky, no summer noon,
But kens the banks o' bonnie Doon;
No human heart but fondly turns
Responsive to the Land of Burns.

Ah, Burns! who dares to call thee poor!
Each skylark nest on yonder moor,
Each daisy-bloom on flowery mead,
The lambs that on the meadows feed,

Each field and brae by burn or stream,
Where wandering lovers come to dream,
Are all thine own. As vassals all
We gather here from princely hall,

From lowly cot, from hills afar,
From southern clime, from western star,
To bring our love; all hearts are thine
By title time can never tyne.

The crowning meed of praise belongs
To him who makes a people's songs;
Who strikes one note—the common good,
One chord—a wider brotherhood;



"SINCE TAM O' SHANTER RODE THIS WAY"

Who drops a word of cheer to bless
His fellow-mortal in distress,
And lightens on life's dusty road
Some traveller, weary of his load;

Who finds the Mousie's trembling heart
Of God's great universe a part;
And in the Daisy's crimson tips
Discerns a soul with human lips.

We little dreamed when "Mailie" died
Those tender words would speed so wide;
Men smiled and wept, and went their way—
The prince was clad in hodden gray.

Though but a brig, it garred me greet
To hear him pour his "Vision" sweet,
And in one crowning climax seal
His pity even for the Deil.

To see the couthie Twa Dogs there,
Their joys and griefs wi' ither share—
A cantie tale, it made me smile
That sic a lad was born in Kyle;

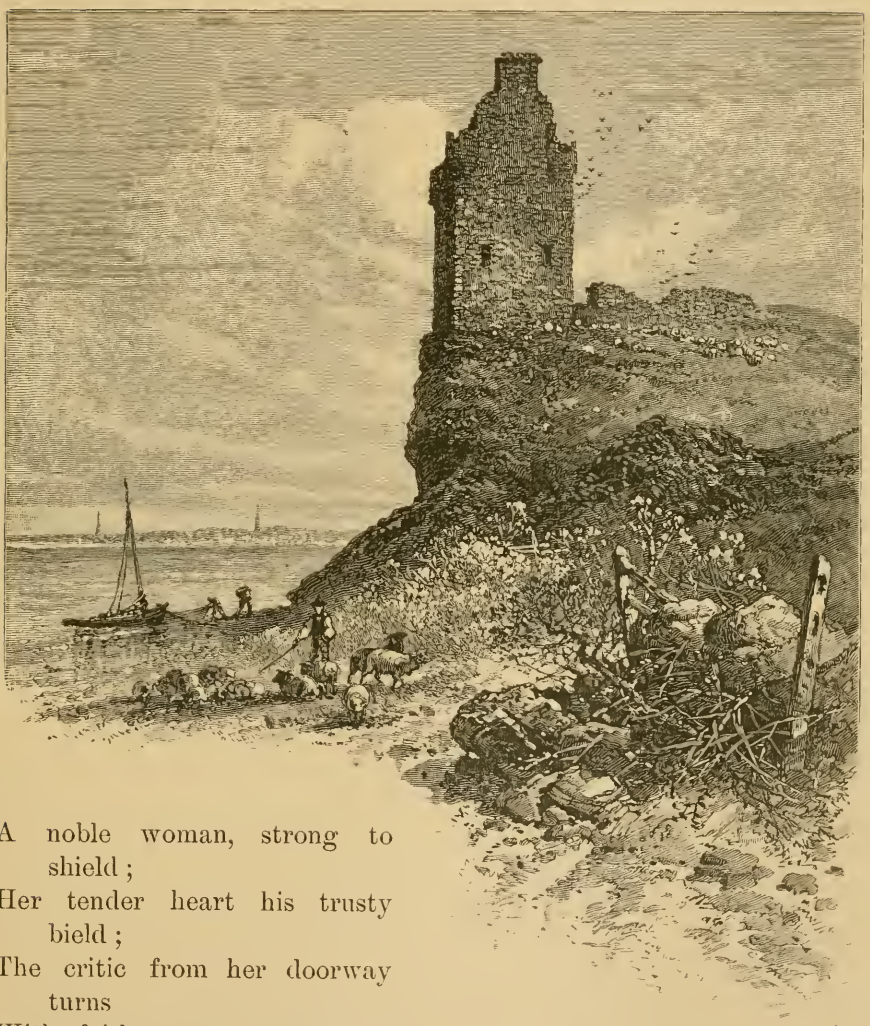
Who caught the witches in a dance,
And bound them all in lasting trance;
The very land is bright and gay
Since Tam o' Shanter rode this way.

The Auld Brig kens the story well
These rippling wavelets love to tell:
"Ayr, gurgling, kissed his pebbled shore"—
A fonder kiss his waters bore.

That raptured hour, that sacred vow,
Are love's eternal treasures now;
Montgomery's towers may fall away,
But Highland Mary lives for aye.

And sweeter still the swelling song
Of loyal love repairing wrong;
Like mavis notes that gently fa'—
"Of a' the airts the wind can blaw."

Brave bonnie Jean! We love to tell
The story from thy lips that fell;
The lengthened life which Heaven gave
Casts radiant twilight on his grave.



A noble woman, strong to shield;
Her tender heart his trusty bield;
The critic from her doorway turns
With faith renewed and love for Burns.

"SHE HEARD HIM BY THE SOUNDING SHORE"

She knew as no one else could know
The heavy burden of his woe;
The carking care, the wasting pain—
Each welded link of misery's chain.

She saw his early sky o'ercast,
And gloomy shadows gathering fast,
His soul by bitter sorrow torn,
And knew that "man was made to mourn."

She heard him by the sounding shore
Which speaks his name for evermore,
And felt the anguish of his prayer:
"Farewell, the bonnie banks of Ayr."

O Robert Burns! by tempest tossed,
Storm-swept, by cruel whirlwinds crossed;
Thy prayers, like David's psalms of old,
Make all our plaints and wailings cold.

In weakness sown, yet raised in might,
He wept that we might know the right;
His sweetest pleasures pain-imbued;
His songs a drama's interlude.

And who dare thrust his idle word
Where God's own equities are heard?
"Who made the heart, 'tis He alone"—
Let him that's guiltless cast the stone.

We know but this: his living song
Protects the weak and tramples wrong;
Refracting radiance of delight,
His prismed genius, clear and bright,

Illumes all Scotland far and wide,
And Caledonia throbs with pride
To hear her grand old Doric swell
From Highland crag to Lowland dell;

To find, where'er her children stray,
Her "Auld Lang Syne," her "Scots wha hae,"
And words of hope which proudly span
The centuries vast—"A man's a man."

Then welcome, Burns, from shore to shore!
All hail, our Robin, evermore!
Though late, we greet the Ploughman's name
Full in the morning of his fame.

"FROM HIGHLAND CRAG TO LOWLAND DELL"

DE FUNIAK LAKE

IN THE ADIRONDACKS OF WESTERN FLORIDA

(*A magic spring one mile in circumference, round as the moon and clear as the sky*)

A LOTUS-LAND where Time forgets its date,
A dreaming-place beneath the swaying trees;
A lake so pure it seems the wedded mate
Of yon fair sky, before the rustling breeze
To rippling laughter wakes its gentle breast,
Showing it, too, is human: Oh, what joy
To roam in sunlight here, kind Nature's guest,
Wooing her smile! or, bliss without alloy,
To watch the moonlight kiss the lapsing wave
With one we love, and speak with answering eyes
The language Paradise ne'er lost, but gave
Lest man should be an outcast from the skies.
No spot so sweet; no water half so blue;
God's crowning circle wrought with compass true.

"UNO DE MILLE"

ONE OF "THE THOUSAND" OF GARIBALDI*

LAKE COMO

Another gone of "The Thousand" brave;
Across Lake Como borne to his grave.
"Uno de Mille" they softly say
Waiting there by the quiet bay:
A crowded piazza, a weeping sky;
Hush! The steamer is drawing nigh.

"Uno de Mille!" Who is he?
A soldier, they whisper, of liberty;

"THE DAWNING DAY TOUCHES THE MOUNTAINS COLD AND GRAY"

* See Preface.

One of the thousand from college hall
Who rallied at Garibaldi's call:
His voyage finished, the anchor cast,
Home at Como to sleep at last.

Home, by her rippling waters blue,
Mirroring skies of tender hue;
Home, where a kinsman's heart-felt tear
Hallows a brother-soldier's bier;
Home, where a noble comrade now
Plaits a chaplet to grace his brow.

Strew with roses the hero's way,
Over the sleeping warrior pray;
Home, from journeying far and wide,
Welcome him here with stately pride;
The night, my brother, comes to me;
The morn, Italia, to thee!

Strew with roses the hero's way,
Over the sleeping warrior pray;
Wake, Italia! Speak for me,
Reunited from sea to sea;
Guard with honor the sacred bier,
"Uno de Mille" is lying here.

Thus mused his comrade through the night,
Weaving a garland fresh and bright;
Sorrowing for a brother dead,
Summoning hours forever fled;
The light burns dim, the dawning day
Touches the mountains cold and gray.

The pen has fallen from his grasp,
His head is bowed, his hands unclasp;
The sunlight pierces the casement there,
He greets the morning with stony stare;
The day, Italia, breaks for thee!
The night, my brother, comes to me.

"HOME, BY HER RIPPLING WATERS BLUE"

Not as he deemed. He little thought
The morrow's work would be unwrought.
Little he dreamed the boat that bore
His comrade dead to Como's shore,
Dark-draped its homeward course should keep
To bear him too where his kinsmen sleep.

Hushed again the crowded square,
Sky and lake the stillness share;
Over the mountains a fading glow—
"Duo de Mille" they murmur low;
One, with tapers in yonder dome,
One, 'neath the starlight, going home.

And so they parted, not in tears,
Wedded in death through coming years;
Sleeping remote by the sunny shore,
Reunited forevermore!
Lake Como sings one song to me:
"The morn, Italia, to thee!"

COLUMBIA'S GARLAND

(At the Unveiling of the Lincoln Monument, Edinburgh, in Memory of Scottish-American Soldiers, August 21st, 1893)

Another clasp of loving hands,
  Another link across the sea,
A living word from distant lands
  To grace the soldiers of the free;
    Columbia, at her Mother's knee,
    Unfolds the scroll of Liberty.

A parchment born of bitter years,
  Red-lined with blood of martyrs leal,
Dark-stained and blurred by captives' tears,
  By dungeon-mould and rusted steel—
    A charter sealed beneath the star
    That led the nations from afar;

To find a green-girt island-home,
  With moat outlasting gates of steel,
Whose bulwark was the ocean foam,
  Whose drawbridge was the floating keel,
    Whereon to bear all round the world
    The flag of Destiny unfurled.

Your Magna Charta rode secure
  Within the *Mayflower's* narrow hold,
That invoice made the shipment sure—
  A Britain poured in larger mould:
    Your Gaelic-Saxon-Norman blood—
    The yeast of Time's great brotherhood.

What complex forces strangely wrought,
  What lasting victories nobly won,
Since Sidney died and Hampden fought,
  Or Milton dreamed of Washington!
    Virginia voiced your stately creed—
    A scion true of Runnymede.

"HIS HONEST FACE HAD POWER TO CHARM"

With tendrils reaching west to rear
  The highest type of manhood's power,
Born of the soil, without a peer,
  Our Lincoln stands the noblest flower
    Of freedom in its widening course
    From Chatham, Fox, and Wilberforce:

To whom an anxious nation turned
  When gathering clouds the sky o'ercast,

A pilot brave with soul that yearned
To guide the ship before the blast;
To hold the faith our fathers knew,
To keep the stars within the blue.

A genius stamped with sterling worth,
Despising juggling and pretence,
His story halos humble birth,
A parable of modest sense;
Endowed to see and do the right—
The majesty of moral might.

Inspired to set in simple speech
The words that sway a people's heart,
Prophetic sentences that reach
Beyond the realm and scope of art;
The humor of a nation's youth,
The wit of plain and homely truth.

'Twas this upheld the faltering arm,
When hearts were faint and bowed in prayer;
His honest face had power to charm
And ease the burden of our care;
With will serene that masters fate,
He taught the land to trust and wait.

With bended knee and listening ear
He watched the hour to speak and save;
Hark! Bells peal out an anthem clear—
He strikes the shackle from the slave:
That deed completes the work begun
By Jefferson and Hamilton.

Embodied here to stand for aye
In memory of soldiers brave,
Who stood in many a bloody fray
In serried ranks our land to save;
To Scotia's sons we proudly turn—
Descendants true of Bannockburn.

"HE STRIKES THE SHACKLES FROM THE SLAVE"

"We cannot consecrate this ground,"
No deed of ours the debt can pay;
The ray across each martyr's mound
Gets stronger purchase day by day—
Each soldier's grave a fulcrum sod—
The lever in the hand of God;

To lift the world to larger life,
To loftier dreams and nobler deeds,
To broaden faith and narrow strife,
To plant the rose and crush the weeds,
Till jealousies forget their date—
The cerements of a worn-out hate.

Through prismed tears let sunlight play,
Secure in joy, redeemed in grief;
One song unites the Blue and Gray,
One glory binds the garnered sheaf—
War's cruel reaping kindly sealed
By brothers of the martyred field.

And so Columbia comes with cheer,
With outstretched hand from o'er the sea,
To place a garland on the bier
Of those who died to keep us free;
And here, beside her Mother's knee,
Unfolds the scroll of Liberty.

MERRIE ENGLAND

Sweet smiling lea with hedge-rows green,
And gray-walled church with ivied tower,
The thatch-roofed cot, mid poplar sheen,
The quiet croft, the lordly tower,
The low-arched bridge by centuries seamed,
The hill-crowned castle's stately wall,
Deep-wooded parks where lovers dreamed,
Cathedral spire and storied hall;
The winding stream with placid flow
By willows marked athwart the mead,
The sloping fields where daisies blow
And skylarks tune their lofty creed—
All this and more old England keeps—
A land of love where memory sleeps.

"DEEP-WOODED PARKS WHERE LOVERS DREAMED"

THE OLD ORGAN (1754)

LODGE CANONGATE KILWINNING, EDINBURGH

(*Tune*—"*Scotland Yet*")

Gae sit beside the organ there,
And touch the guid auld keys;
We want a dear familiar air,
And "Scotland Yet" will please:
A noble song our hearts to greet
From out the hallowed years,
An offering meet with music sweet
That fills the eyes with tears;
For love is strong though time is fleet,
And love alone endears.

Ay, fond and full the swelling notes,
The pipes with rapture glow,
As vague and shadowy memory floats
From out the long ago:
The golden reeds can ne'er forget
The nights so fair and free,
When brothers met and "Scotland Yet"
Rang out with hearty glee;
For love alone has no regret,
And love is throned in thee.

The pictured walls bend low to hear
The tender anthem rise;
A gentle moisture, like a tear,
Bedews that worthy's eyes;

Old "Scotland Yet"—the only air
To wake the silent fold—
Our chief St. Clair and Drummond there
Seem nearer than of old;
For love is still the only prayer
That warms the lips when cold.

Ah, brothers, who have gone before
Across the silent sea,
Remembered still for evermore,
We raise our song to thee;
And, in some lull of harmony,
When pearly gates swing wide,
"My Ain Countrie," still dear to thee,
And "Scotland Yet," beside,
Will lead in sacred psalmody
Where love shall aye abide.

Then once again a ringing cheer
And pledge from every heart
To Canongate Kilwinning dear,
Ere friends and brothers part;
A health to all on shore or sea
Who love the sacred fount,
Where'er they be, frae Ettrick free
To Shasta's silver mount—
Old "Scotland Yet," with honors three,
Up all! count, wardens, count!

Hark to the echo of the strain;
The cable-tow is strong;
Alaska answers the refrain
Which India's skies prolong:
To brothers near and brothers far
The hailing-sign is cast,
And sceptre-bar or jewel-spar
Cannot that word outlast;
From Southern Cross to Northern Star
The bond of love is fast.

So sit beside the organ there
  And touch the guid auld keys,
A golden hour we'll blithely share,
  And "Scotland Yet" will please.
Sing of her lakes and quiet dells
  Close-fondled by the sea;
Each hill that swells with glory tells
  The story of the free;
While broom and whin and heather-bells
  Respond with three times three.

"SING OF HER LAKES AND QUIET DELLS"

IN CLOVER AND HEATHER

There are greetings the wide world over,
And blossoms wherever we roam,
But none like the heather and clover
To welcome the wanderer home.

Warm-hearted with kindred devotion,
Twin sisters in sympathy true,
They whisper across the wide ocean,
Love-laden with memory's dew.

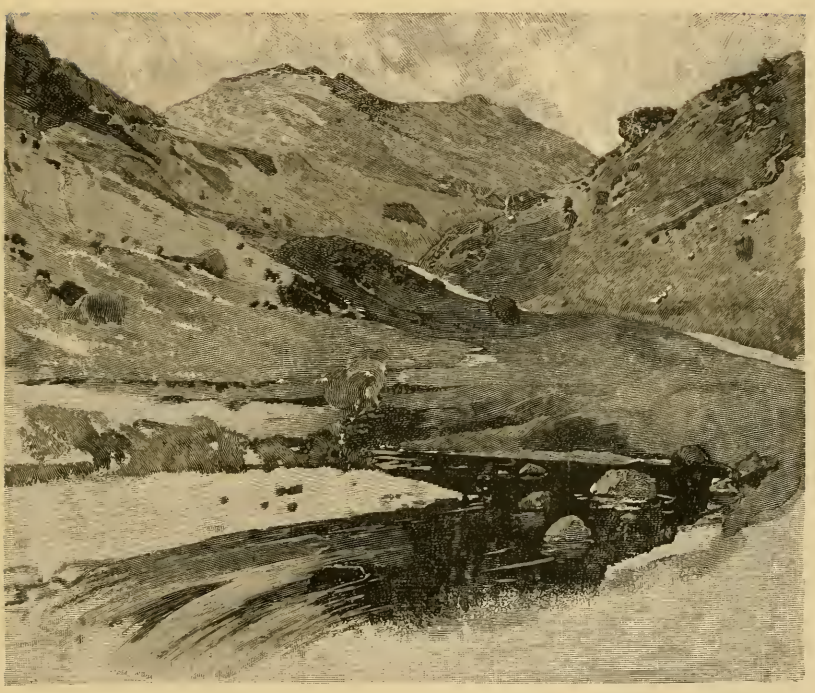
In purple tints woven together
The Hudson shakes hands with the Tweed,
Commingling with Abbotsford's heather
The clover of Sunnyside's mead.

A token of friendship immortal
With Washington Irving returns—
Scott's ivy entwined o'er his portal
By the "Blue-eyed Lassie" of Burns.

Their names by heather-bells wedded
With fondness Columbia retains;
In freedom's foundation imbedded
The lay of the minstrel remains.

Ay, this their commission and glory,
In redolent bloom to prolong
Love, liberty, legend, and story,
That blossom in ballad and song.

So here's to the clover and heather
Of river-side, mountain, and glen,
As I stand wi' doffed bonnet and feather
At the yetts of my forebears again!



"SO HERE'S TO THE CLOVER AND HEATHER"

TWO ARGOSIES

(Antonio's and Shakespeare's)

"The ducats take! I'll sign the bond to-day:
No storm can wreck Antonio's white-winged fleet;
My stately ships secure ride every bay
From Tripolis to Indies' golden seat.
The ducats take, Bassanio, go thy way;
Thy Portia win, and bid me to the feast;
Ten thousand men Antonio's nod obey,
And of ten thousand Shylock is the least.
I'll sign the bond, thy words cannot avail,
No chance can reach the wealth I share with thee:
I stand secure, let cruel fortune rail
Till Venice sleeps beneath bright Adria's sea."
Fate heard the boast—a thousand vessels lay
'Mid rocks and sands to waves an idle prey.

The dramas take! That bond at least is sure;
Twelve thousand words more dear than ducats are
Outride the storms of ages and endure,
Safe anchored here within the shifting bar
Of changing speech. Eternal now his tongue,
By right divine, sways all the world with grace:
Great bond of all—sweet Shakespeare sung;
His commerce brings the nations face to face.
His dramas take! Their wealth shall still survive;
His argosies care not for time or fate;
All else may pass, and crowding centuries strive,
That bond alone is not determinate.
In him proud Albion lives entire and hale,
Her titled language crowned in high entail.

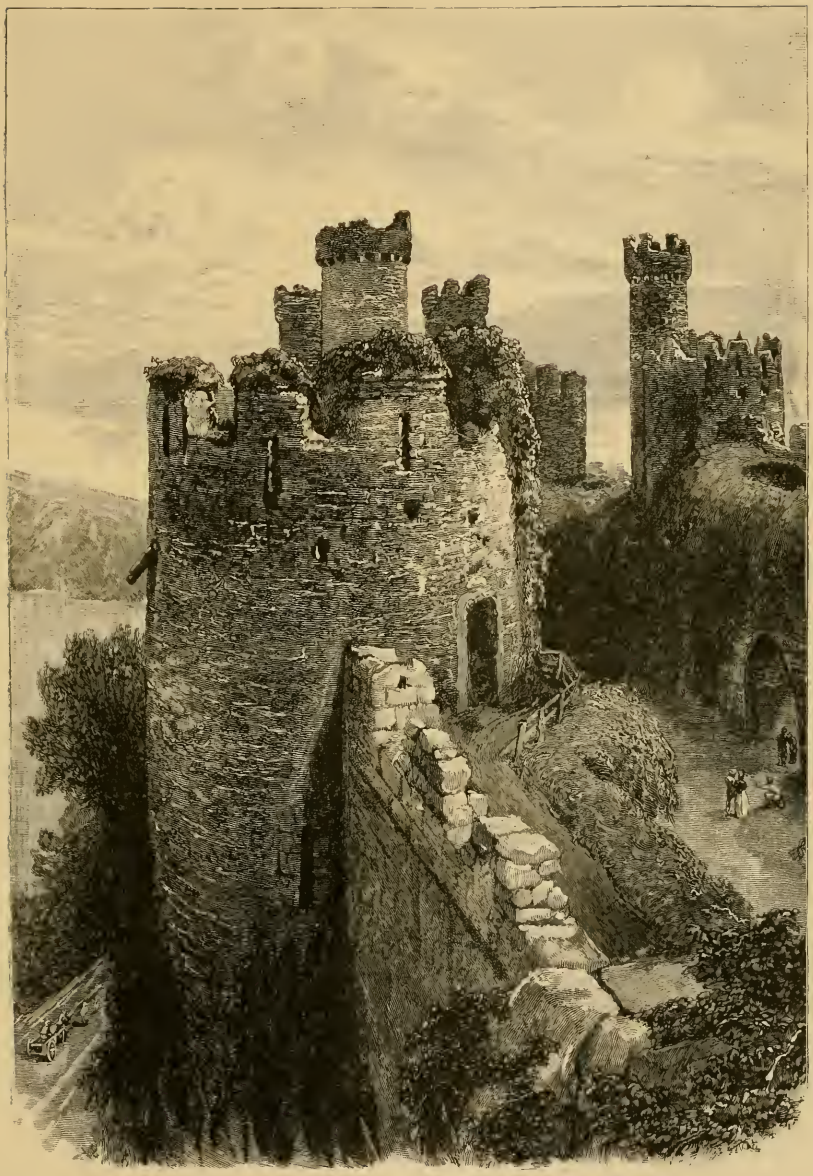
EPILOGUE

To the Shakespeare Society, Edinburgh, and its honored President, Samuel Neil

And now to thee, dear Shakespeare friends, to-night
Two argosies are here and both secure;
One rich with love and one with memory bright—
Life's only wealth, a cargo safe and sure.
With lifted sail fond memory floats away,
But love remains, the argosy I brought;
A welcome waits in yonder sunlit bay
These freighted dreams with kindness all inwrought.
One invoice here, and one beyond the sea
That needs no notary's scrawl or consul's seal;
In every land one word is sesame—
A Shakespeare passport signed by Samuel Neil.
"Bon Voyage" give, and grant your leader's name,
No Saxon port too distant for his fame.

AT CONWAY CASTLE

Thy massive walls and battlements are bare,
A newer Britain claims the century's gaze;
And yet these battered stones her glory share—
The strength and refuge of heroic days:
Great object-lesson of long bitter years
When feudal chiefs wrought upward toward the light,
A bitter nursery wet with captives' tears,
But nursery still for God and human right.
In yonder vale behold the school-house lifts
Its gentler turrets to the coming day,
To crown the land with manhood's noblest gifts,
The nation's strength and freedom's only stay:
"Knowledge is Power"; make every window wide—
God's light for all! For this our fathers died.



"THY MASSIVE WALLS AND BATTLEMENTS ARE BARE"

ON GUARD

THE ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH NEW YORK REGIMENT AT GETTYSBURG

We cannot consecrate this field,
  Or hallow ground where heroes stood;
Thus spoke the man whose words have sealed
  Our lips in Freedom's Holy Rood.

We cannot dedicate. Too well
  Our Lincoln knew the Temple's cost,
He heard the nation's anthem swell:
  Your deeds survive, our words are lost.

The brave men living and the dead,
  Who wrought the epic of the free,
Have consecrated here, he said,
  The land, the world, to liberty.

And now amid the whirling years
  That punctuate the swift decades,
You come with blended joy and tears,
  In peace beneath the gathering shades,

To contemplate from hill to hill
  The line you held those bitter days,
Again to feel your pulses thrill,
  Once more to take your meed of praise;

With noble monument to mark
  The spot where Dutchess, tried and true,
Stood by the faith when skies were dark,
  And stars were blotted from the blue;

A picket outpost here for aye
With watchword of the Hudson born,
To note the moonlight shadows play,
To greet with joy the early morn;

A silent sentinel to keep
Its post along the quiet line;
A Bannockburn, where brothers sleep—
A Waterloo, where roses twine.

Ay, Gettysburg, thy name at last
Proclaims the triumph of the race;
'Tis here the future greets the past,
And faith asserts her crowning grace.

No other battle-field like thine,
Where love joins hands across the way,
One flag, one land, a sacred shrine
Alike unto the Blue and Gray.

Then rear the graven stone with pride
Along the line where freedom's van
Shall speak to generations wide
The final victory of man:

That love and law will reign supreme
Where'er the starry banner waves,
When stones that now in sunlight gleam
Shall lie in dust above their graves.

"WHILE LAPSING WAVE AND CRAG KEEP FAITHFUL TRYST"

TANTÁLLON CASTLE

No more Tantállon rings with battle-cry
  Or shout of triumph in the martial list;
No bugle-call or seneschal's reply
  Pierces the darkness or the driving mist:
I sit alone and hear the night winds sigh,
  Till now yon battlement by moonlight kissed
Responds with echoes that will never die,
  While lapsing wave and crag keep faithful tryst:
Again proud Marmion waits the purple morn
  To meet his fate on Flodden's bitter field;

To fairer fortune brave De Wilton born
Watches with Clare beside the Douglas shield:
What wondrous power! Behold the Wizard's art—
His soul the lens, his realm the human heart.

AT LINLITHGOW

RIDING THE MARCHES

Hark to the summons! Mount and ride!
  Linlithgow speaks, her sons are here;
From quiet loch to flowing tide
  Her bugle-note swells loud and clear:
    Ride, brothers, ride the marches wide,
    With stately pomp and civic pride.

King David's royal borough fair
  Proclaims long centuries of fame;
Eight hundred years her annals bear
  The record of a noble name;
    Ride fair and free; o'er loch and lea
    Linlithgow's banner bears the gree.

St. Michael's Church, with visioned aisle
  Where spirits pled for Scotia's weal,
Still guards in peace a stately pile,
  Where erst stood Edward's lofty peel:
    Queen Margaret's bower and roofless tower
    Remain Linlithgow's richest dower.

And Scotland's Mary, cradled here,
  Whose beauty still the world o'ersways,
Makes lake and wood and stream more dear—
  Her smile upon the landscape plays:
    A sunny dream, a morning beam,
    Before the lightning's lurid gleam.

A wider boundary now belongs
  Than when your palace walls were reared;
You speak in David Lindsay's songs,
  You live by Walter Scott endeared;
    Your marches reach where mothers teach
    The Doric or the English speech.

Then rally round the old Cross Well,
  Ride east and west, ride south and north;
Each year your ancient landmarks tell,
  From 'Lithgow to the banks of Forth:
    Your history keep, though monarchs sleep
    And ivy round yon turrets creep.

So here's to old St. Michael's Well,
  As years their golden links unwind,
And lisping children come to spell—
  "St. Michael is to Strangers kinde."
    Up all, and ride with stately pride—
    That legend makes your marches wide.

A ROYAL ROUTE

FROM GETTYSBURG TO ATLANTA—FROM ATLANTA TO THE SEA

(*At the Poughkeepsie Reunion of the One Hundred and Fiftieth New York Regiment*)

Gay-bannered streets a greeting speak,
And standards bright with storied name;
While moistened eye and burning cheek
Unite proud welcome to proclaim.

But waving plumes are symbols cold
To voice what Dutchess here would say—
And speech is silver, silence gold,
When memories o'er our heartstrings play.

The same rich glory floods the land,
October flings her colors out,
As when your noble, loyal band
Went forth upon its royal route;

To bear yon flag, which loved ones gave,
Through forest, plain, and mountains vast;
Our father's heritage to save,
To keep fair freedom's title fast—

At Gettysburg, where fate and fame
Three days the wreath of victory tossed
From hill to hill through battery-flame,
From line to line where courage crossed—

In Tennessee, where Lookout Height
With thunder-tone revealed the law,
A cloud-wreathed Sinai, clad with might—
Resaca, Dallas, Kenesaw—

And nameless fields where valor led,
As Hooker blazed his southward way,
Till Allatoona heard the tread
Of Sherman's troops that came to stay.

I've walked those rugged mountain ways
Where echoes sleep 'mid tranquil joys;
Have waked the hills with notes of praise,
And touched my hat to "Ketcham's Boys."

Have marked the fields whereon they stood,
With pride for Dutchess, tried and true,
And deemed each spot a holy rood,
Made sacred by the Boys in Blue.

O grand old Twentieth Army Corps!
Our hearts go out to thee and thine—
Seven thousand reached Atlanta's door
Of seventeen thousand men in line.

Dark, cruel days! Ten thousand lost!
Engulfed in war's encrimsoned tide;
A fearful price! but worth the cost—
The land is free for which they died.

Then who would grudge to men like these
The pensioned pittance of a crust?
Strike down yon flag that flaunts the breeze,
And all your wealth is glittering dust.

A land with honor gone is naught,
The people want no huckstering cry;
Too rich the realm for which they fought
To let her brave defenders die.

The wires are cut. The army swings
  Through seas of pine from moorings free;
With Slocum now the Twentieth sings
  The March through Georgia to the Sea.

And so the deep, proud chorus swells
  From north to south through all the land—
A symphony of golden bells
  Swung by the Great Director's hand;

Till every state from east to west
  Takes up Columbia's glorious chant—
Faith, freedom, hope, and truth abreast—
  With grand crescendo under Grant.

PARIS

Paris the fair, the gay, the beautiful,
Paris the winsome, soft with lithesome grace;
All adjectives are thine that lovers cull
From glowing speech fond symmetry to trace.
Bewitching, buoyant, rapturous, and blest,
Enchanting, charming, exquisite, and dear;
Proud of thy conquest, all the world thy guest!
Life's fashion-plate unrolled in fulness here:
Paris the fair, at noontide, morn, and night,
But sweeter still when gentle twilight falls,
Or moonlight plays o'er columns pure and white
On stately boulevard where bliss enthralls:
There is but one, no other like to thee—
Paris the fair, the beautiful, the free!

"ON STATELY BOULEVARD WHERE BLISS ENTHRALLS"

FOURTH OF JULY AT BANNOCKBURN

So may God defend the cause of truth and liberty as He did that day.—Robert Burns

Ay, everywhere all round the world
  May God defend, as on this field,
The flag of liberty unfurled,
  The Truth by blood of martyrs sealed;
    Burns' prayer is ours: God bless the cause
    When freemen stand for freedom's laws.

God bless the cause as on that day!
  Swell wide the song, each note is dear;
Five centuries have passed away,
  The dawning of the sixth is near;
    From every land your sons return
    To press the field of Bannockburn.

To greet the storied standard here
  In sacred light of early morn—
God bless the land; each rood is dear
  Where Scottish liberty was born—
    A battle for the world beside,
    A victory for the nations wide.

A link to bind the old and new,
  To make more close the kindred tie,
To span with light the ocean blue,
  To float in song 'neath sunnier sky—
    The note that swells in "Scots wha hae"
    All round the world has come to stay.

At Marathon and Runnymede,
By Stirling Bridge, at Naseby Field,
Fair freedom conned a lofty creed
And wrote *Impune* on her shield;
Then westward brushed the morning dew
And set the stars within the blue.

No dwellers in Utopia they—
Brave Pilgrims housed in narrow hold;
Fate took the helm, a wintry bay
Stern welcome gave that starving fold;
What seeds of time the Mayflower bore
From Albion to Columbia's shore!

To gentler vales, to brighter streams,
To prairies carpeted with flowers;
To mountains ribbed with golden seams,
To quiet haunts and woodland bowers—
The poet's "Island of the Blest,"
The fair Republic of the West.

So here beside the flowing rill
We come with joy to trace the source,
To note the fount, to feel the thrill
Of manhood in its widening course,
And standing round the old Borestone,
Pledge Wallace, Bruce, and Washington.

Dear Scotia! Homestead of the past,
Enshrined through all the fleeting years;
Your ivy tendrils bind us fast;
A common heritage endears;
May God defend! Burns' prayer is ours,
Engird the world with Freedom's flowers.

"TO MOUNTAINS RIBBED WITH GOLDEN SEAMS"

ANNIVERSARY OF ROBERT BURNS

(*At Lodge Canongate Kilwinning, January* 25, 1890)

Again Kilwinning's hearth grows wide,
The tessellated floor is bright;
A mother's heart with loving pride
Salutes her honored Sons of Light.

They gather from the banks of Ayr,
Frae Ettrick, Yarrow, and the Tay,
A golden hour of love to share,
To crown with joy the natal day

Of bard and poet lowly born
To teach the brotherhood of man,
With skylark lilt of early morn,
And notes that thrill the patriot's van;

With swelling song and living truth,
From hearts of fire and tongues of flame,
Fast binding in eternal youth
Proud Scotia's Pleiades of Fame.

They come—a galaxy of cheer
In answer to the festal call:
Loved Willie Hay to memory dear,
And Lockhart of the Minstrel Hall;

Aytoun and Stewart, Boswell, Blair,
Kit North—the master of the feast—
The Shepherd, and the Lad from Ayr
Whose songs unite the west and east;

And girdle all the world to-night
With chords that make the nations one:
A mystic grip of matchless might—
A cable-tow by genius spun.

O genius! Oracle of God!
We bow in wonder at his shrine,
Through whom the daisy-sprinkled sod
Is rendered human and divine.

Through whom each form of life appears
To wear a brighter, holier grace;
His pity soothes the Mousie's fears,
And halos dying Mailie's face.

He sees his love in dewy flower,
He hears her in the tunefu' bird;
He deifies the raptured hour,
And seals it with an angel-word.

He saw in man's uplifted face
The promise of a grander time;
He sang the freedom of the race,
He boldly rang the century's chime.

The night was cold, he could not wait,
He left his message at the door;
Ere morning came he took the gate—
We worship, we can do no more.

Ay, Robbie Burns, not poor but brave,
Neglected long but loved at last;
The laurel-wreath Kilwinning gave
Was foretaste of the fame thou hast.

WITH HEARTY GRASP

(On presenting a fac-simile of the Declaration of Independence to Lodge-Canongate-Kilwinning, Edinburgh)

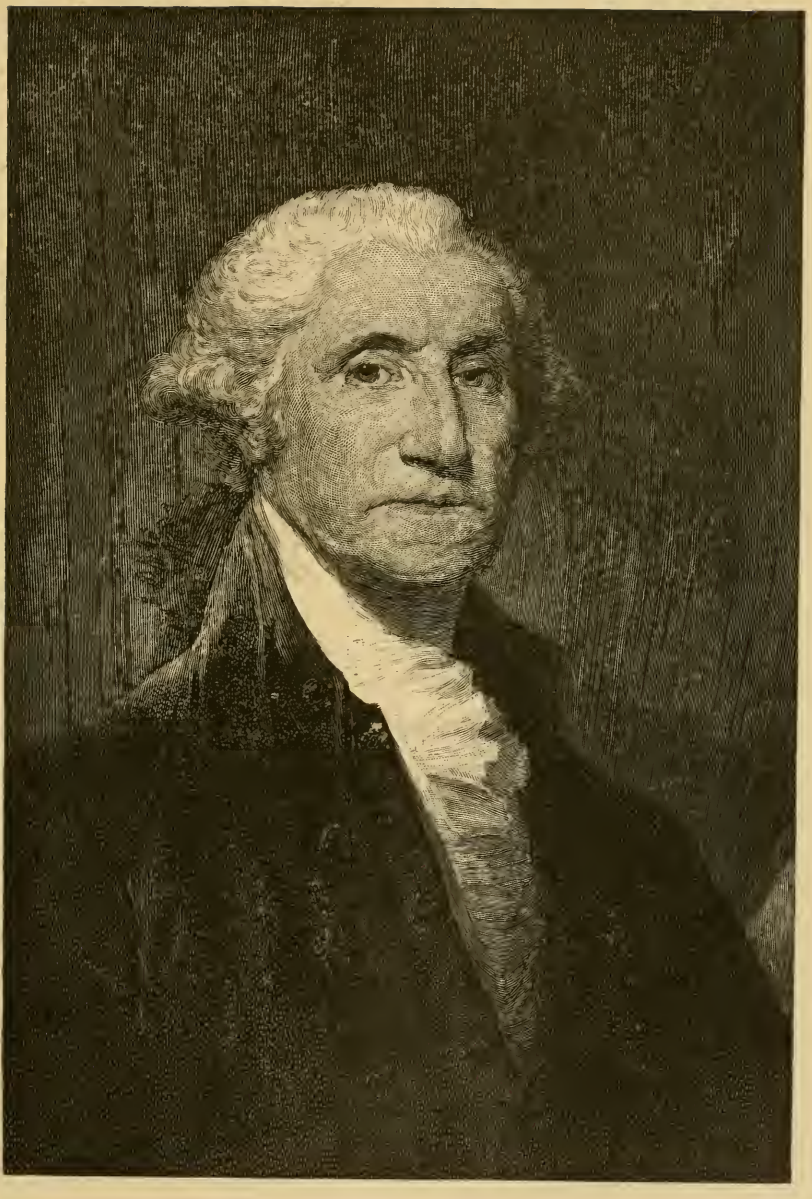
Once more within these hallowed walls
We celebrate our Laureate dear,
Whose genius all the world enthralls,
Whose love awakens festal cheer:
For here the peasant ploughman stood,
With daisies from the banks of Ayr,
To make this spot a Holy Rood—
An altar for each brother's prayer.

But what shall one from o'er the sea
With honor bring as offering meet;
What voice or word from them to thee
Which every heart will fondly greet;
What theme shall young Columbia bear
To swell the chorus of your song?
Well, "Here's a hand, my trusty fier,"
With words that to the tune belong.

Words born of Magna Charta brave,
Along the banks of Runnymede:
At Bannockburn, where freemen gave
A bonnie cast to freedom's seed;
Conceived at far-off Marathon,
At Salamis, Thermopylæ;
Crowned in the heart of Washington,
The noblest product of the free.

Immortal words! The grandest strain
  That ever thrilled the onward van,
Soul-stirring notes in symbols plain,
  Life's lofty creed—"A man's a man;"
Ay, Robbie Burns, that song of thine
  Narrows the seas and girds the world,
And makes these walls a sacred shrine,
  Where faith and love shall be unfurled.

So take the page your children wrote;
  A common pride is yours and theirs;
Parents their children fondly quote,
  And weel-bred bairns their ain forebears:
Love's cable-tow for evermore
  Binds gallant sire and sturdy son
With hearty grasp from shore to shore,
  For Robert Burns and Washington.



"CROWNED IN THE HEART OF WASHINGTON"

COLUMBIA'S SON

He stood beneath the crowning monument
To Walter Scott in Edinboro' town,
A lad of six, our Malcolm, who had spent
Scarcely a week 'mid Scotland's heather brown;
And, sighing, asked his mother every day—
"Why don't they paint these houses, old and gray?"

For well he knew the Hudson's cheery shore,
With golden sunsets flooding all the west;
Could lisp a bit of Rip Van Winkle's lore,
And deemed his home an island of the blest;
So dear the homestead brook and crystal lake,
We thought at first his little heart would break.

And what to him was all the storied past,
The rich romance which Scotia's children share?
Too young to know the love that binds us fast,
Which he some day will also proudly bear;
He only saw dun walls and grayish sky
To dim the blue of his bright laughing eye.

Methought, therefore, an object-lesson now
I'll give the boy, right here, upon the spot;
Beneath the kindly, clear, uncovered brow
Of him we love, our glorious Walter Scott;
I'll tell him why this lofty pile commands
The reverent homage of far distant lands.

I bade him look from base to towering spire,
From flying buttress to dissolving line,

To crowded niches with their minstrel-choir,
Whose living songs all hearts and lands entwine;
I thought to make full clear ere I began
The greatness of the poet and the man.

I had my points arranged to make them tell,
The Trosachs, Tweed, and Forth in order due:
Highland and Lowland, crag and misty fell,
Where beacons blazed and fiery crosses flew;
I summoned all the wealth at my command,
And held my audience fairly by the hand.

Enrapt he stood; intently gazed on high—
He seemed so small beneath that spire so great;
I thought to get "Don't know" as his reply,
And then at large upon my theme dilate:
'Twould take, forsooth, the best part of an hour
To sketch the Wizard and his matchless power.

"Now, listen, Malcolm," slowly I began—
I didn't want the little fellow dazed—
"Just think a moment: Do you know the man
For whom this noble monument was raised?"
With answer worthy of Columbia's son
He took it in, and said: "George Washington."

"TO WALTER SCOTT IN EDINBORO' TOWN"

THE PROTEST OF THE IMMORTALS

(On a proposed tunnel in Princes Street, Edinburgh)

A SINGULAR meeting the other night!
  Did you hear of it up at Parliament Hall?
Just twelve o'clock, the moon shone bright;
  A strange, weird brilliancy flooded all
    The rich-stained windows—the portraits there
    The spectral radiance seemed to share.

I followed the crowd, a ghostly throng,
  A curious group of former days;
As through the portal it surged along
  Familiar faces met my gaze;
    As if the library down below
    Had yielded its worthies for public show.

In close procession, a hundred or more;
  But it seemed so strange, no voice or word,
No footfall on the oaken floor;
  An old-time Provost proffered a word,
    A motion forsooth, for then and there
    Sir Walter responded and took the chair.

He seemed full pale as he rose to speak
  And bowed his head to the eager crowd,
But a flush forthwith illumed his cheek;
  Erect his form, which erst was bowed;
    Intent on the Wizard seemed to be
    That quaint, peculiar company.

I noted expressions of scorn and pride
  Vividly flashed from face to face;

The Minstrel dashed a tear aside,
Appealing, forsooth, to the Scottish race;
Ay, more, each gesture seemed to be
For his darling city a loving plea.

I saw him point to the legend there
Emblazoned upon the windows high;
To the crown that Scotia used to wear
When her heroes dared to do and die;
And he seemed to say, "Edina's crown
Shall not for gold be trampled down."

All hands went up at the table round,
Where sat Kit North with flowing quill,
And the sentences seemed to leap and bound
Like living sparks from his sturdy will—
A protest deep, a trumpet word
Straight from the heart, for his soul was stirred.

A moment's pause: they were asked to sign;
But who would lead that famous band?
Who on the roll of Auld Lang Syne,
Prince or peasant, thus dared to stand?
With one accord the gathering turns,
And straightway summons Robert Burns.

He came and proudly wrote his name,
The clear, bold hand beloved by all,
And there seemed to burst a loud acclaim
That shook the roof of the stately hall;
His plain sign-manual seemed to say
"We guard 'Auld Reekie' from wrong to-day."

Shoulder to shoulder in steady file,
I noted them all as they passed along—
Dugald Stewart and stern Carlyle,
Riddell and Lockhart of Border Song,
Professor Aytoun and dear John Brown,
Brougham and Erskine in wig and gown;

Hugh Miller and Pollok, Mackenzie, Blair,
Cockburn, Jeffrey, and David Hume;
Hogg and Ramsay—a curious pair;
De Quincey, "Delta" in *nom de plume;*
Drummond of Hawthornden, Boswell, Home,
Fergusson, Alison—still they come.

They stood in groups, the roll was done;
The chairman rose, they listened all;
St. Giles pealed out the hour of one,
They took their way from the silent hall;
Over the parchment alone I bent—
It seemed like the League and Covenant.

I read it there in the fading light,
A message strange from the shadowy past;
With storied names forever bright
While Scotland's fame and glory last;
The ink on that parchment shall never fade
Till Arthur's Seat in the Forth is laid:

"Stand by your city, and guard it well—
That street is more than a common wynd
For smoking chimneys and sooty smell;
Has Plutus made your guardians blind?
What god your senses has so beguiled
That art and nature shall be defiled?"

So said Kit North; and I read with joy—
"Stand by your city, and guard it well;
For a mess of pottage or base alloy
Who dare your birthright of beauty sell?
Never! ah, never! Edina mine,
Shall force or folly thy virtue tyne.

"Stand by your city, and guard it well,
Burrow in rocks for your tunnelled ways;
Taint not the soil with carbon fell,
The flowers or the sod where the sunlight plays."

No wonder the hall with wild applause
Greeted the reading of every clause.

"Stand by your city, and guard it well;
Greed is mighty, but truth prevails;
Let not your children's children tell
How beauty was bartered for iron rails."
Such was the meeting in Parliament Hall.
"*Nemo impune!*" Guard us all.

TO A BRITHER CHIEL ACROSS THE SEA

For thirty days I've been your debtor,
Since I received your honor's letter;
Henceforth I promise to do better,
Excuse delay;
I ha'e been bound as wi' a fetter
This mony a day.

Not in the folds of fond caresses,
Fair auburn locks and golden tresses,
Or "withs"—the consulate confesses—
Of stately cares;
But, on the knowledge he possesses,
Respondent swears—

And prays for grace and absolution,
With full and ample restitution,
The case admits of quick solution
When Cadman learns
The facts without circumlocution—
I've been wi' Burns.

I think your honor gets my meaning,
The Court has always had a leaning
To kindred spirit-souls convening,
Their hearts to share:
In brief, I've had a blithe careening
Ayont the Ayr,

Where stands the cottage of his birth,
A sacred shrine for all the earth,

The humble room, the narrow hearth,
With lesson wide,
That love and faith and honest worth
Shall aye abide.

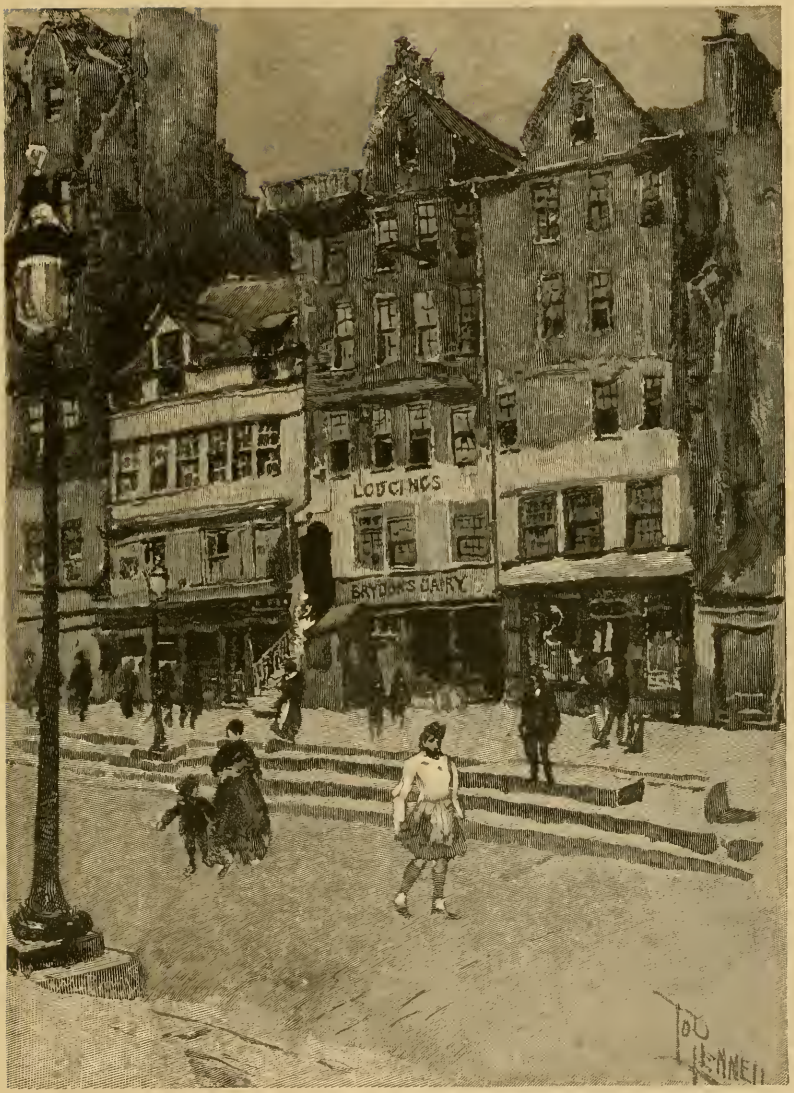
I traced the love-lit winding stream,
Sweet monogram of passion's dream;
I seemed to hear the moonlight gleam
In loving croon,
As gently fell its fondling beam
On bonnie Doon.

I saw auld Alloway's roofless kirk,
Where ling'ring "ghaists and houlets" lurk,
Wi' Nannie glintin' through the mirk,
Queen o' the ball,
And Satan sitting like a Turk
Amang them all.

Ay, more, I "lectured" down in "Killie,"
Where Fame still "canters like a filly,"
And cracked wi' lads that were na chilly,
Till hours were sma',
And time was measured by the gillie,
Or no' ava.

Straightway Auld Reekie's storied street
And Baxter Close in glory greet,
Stair Number One, that stayed his feet,
When first he came,
To make Edina's page complete,
And crown her fame.

And then the last, but not the least,
I wrote some lines for Robin's feast,
Where "raising" isna done by yeast,
But in a style
Which Brothers brought frae "'way down east,"
Fu' mony a mile.



"STAIR NUMBER ONE THAT STAYED HIS FEET"

Kilwinning Canongate they ca' it,
Lodge Number Two, lang love befa' it,
By genius "tiled," time canna thraw it,
Till Nature sleeps,
For Robbie there was wreathed the Laureate
With crown that keeps.

I therefore trust the Court's decision—
Waiving the forms of strict precision—
Will grant reprieve for Love's omission,
And draw it mild;
Wi' Burns and business in collision
We're baith beguiled.

"I SAW AULD ALLOWAY'S ROOFLESS KIRK"

TO A LADIES' ART CLUB

(Accepting Invitation to Lecture on "Womanhood in Shakespeare")

Some pleasant day
In blooming May,
Though rather late,
Will suit for date.

The classic song,
That "art is long,"
Applies to this
Protracted bliss.

But Time, alas!
Just turns his glass,
And months go by,
As swallows fly.

The sands run swift
And gently sift
Our locks with gray
Ere close of day.

'Tis surely right,
And fitting quite,
That Art should wait
At Nature's gate.

When summer showers
Bring out the flowers,
She then will greet
Her sister sweet.

But "Womanhood,"
As woman should,
In dear Shakespeare
Blooms all the year.

Each flower that grows
His garden knows,
Immortal there
In summer air.

In every zone
Their names are known;
Their love and worth
Enrich the earth.

The Arden grove
Breathes Ros'lind's love;
The pansy lives
Ophelia gives.

Miranda's isle
Will ever smile,
And roses bloom
On Juliet's tomb.

The woman-queen,
Fair Imogen,
Preserves his dream
By Avon's stream.

The sweetest flower
In Belmont's bower
Still speaks of thee,
Dear Jessica,

And Portia fair,
Whose caskets rare
Still tell the truth
To heedless youth.

Cordelia, too,
So fond and true,
    Thy gentle word,
    Through centuries heard,

Still stirs each heart
To do its part,
    And bravely lead
    In word and deed.

But song of ours
Don't match the flowers.
    Ah, that the words
    Were humming-birds!

The lines are short
To write this sort,
    So I will say
    "Good-bye" till May.

But when you read
This Shakespeare screed,
    Include, I pray,
    Ann Hathaway.

THE SUNNY SOUTH

I TAKE mine ease in mine inn to-day,
A lovely nook in the sunny south,
How gently the clouds on the landscape lay
Like dimples around a laughing mouth;
My host's kind greeting abideth yet,
And a face that peered out through the flowers,
Caught as it were in a tangled net
Of roses that fell in softest showers:
I picked the blossoms and have them still,
I wonder if I will see her to-night;
Perhaps she would like a stroll to the mill,
Or down by the lakeside clear and bright:
It's a charming spot, and I think I'll stay—
The landlord has such a winning way.

NOBBY ISLAND, RIVER ST. LAWRENCE

You tell me you want a poem to-night,
A yard and a half of visions bright,
A Highland plaid for the Thousand Isles,
A rainbow scarf of forty miles—
Something worthy the fairy dream
Of this rural Venice and sainted stream;
A modest request, when every morn
Your Thousand Island poem is born.

I sit by the rock where the waters laugh,
But the Muse refuses her autograph;
I mount to the summit of Pullman's tower,
But the picture transcends the poet's power;
In Carleton's hammock I fondly swing,
But fail to find his magic ring;
And all, perhaps, because the real
Just here is greater than the ideal.

The same is true of the Hudson stream,
Illumed with the light of fancy's dream;
But that is straightforward compared with this
Kaleidoscope of enchanted bliss;
With her I have taken my poems straight,
And never before have tempted fate,
For rash the poet who dare bespeak
A game with these islands at hide-and-seek.

So let these wanderers lose their way
'Mid sunny islands where echoes play;
Our words are whispers, the purest gold
Is that which hearts of love enfold.

The simplest lines hold richest truth;
The sweetest lives enduring youth;
Let these abide and sunlight smile
For evermore on Nobby Isle.

"WITH THESE ISLANDS TO PLAY AT HIDE-AND-SEEK"

TO PROFESSOR JOHN STUART BLACKIE

COMMEMORATING HIS EIGHTIETH YEAR

(*Read at the Hellenic Society, Edinburgh,* 1890)

Dame Nature, communing with Coila one day,
Remarked in a social, neighborly way,
That she had been kept rather busy of late
Attending to poets and matters of state;

That Robbie had closed up the century well,
And Byron and Scott would hold out for a spell;
She was therefore inclined to take a vacation,
And, on her return, to startle the nation;

Would visit, forsooth, Asia Minor and Greece,
And lay out a plan for her great masterpiece.
So she wandered unseen for a time among men,
Returning about eighteen hundred and ten.

Then straightway to Coila her way she betook,
And found her ensconced in a bright cosey nook.
With swift-wingèd words her tale she began—
I've found the essentials for making a man:

The proper proportion of genius and art,
Love, humor, and pathos, mind, body, and heart,
With habiliments, too, that are fit for a king,
Or better, for genuine princes that sing.

I met the nine Muses, who gave me a piece—
A delicate web of the old Golden Fleece—
Which they bade me to take far over the wave
To bright sunny lands where magnolias wave;

To a fountain of youth, Ponce de Leon by name,
And I wandered for months without finding the same;
The woes of Ulysses were nothing to mine,
But I stayed by the Fleece as I promised the Nine;

Till there in a wilderness, silent and vast,
In a clear sparkling pool the token was cast;
And lo, as I gazed, the Fleece took the form
Of a mantle well woven for sunshine or storm.

Be it Jason or Stuart, "Midlothian" still
Is the brand of this Greek-Scotch-American twill;
And, Coila, the laddie will never grow old
Whose heart is enwrapped in this wondrous fold.

From the east to the west, from the old to the new,
From Helicon dry to Columbia's dew
I have wandered at will; this staff in my hand
Was found in the groves of fair Florida's land;

Amid pines that embosom de Funiak Spring,
Where poplar and laurel the poets outsing,
Where children of Scotia in happiness dwell,
By a fountain as sacred as St. Ronan's well;

In gardens of lotus, with sunshine so clear
That the centuries glide without noting the year:
So, Coila, adieu! I go with the morn,
Guard plaidie and staff for the genius unborn;

It may be a month, or it may be a day,
Look well to the infant that's coming this way;
And, also remember, this mantle of joy
Will keep its possessor forever a boy.

THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD

Hail, Canongate Kilwinning, hail
Your Laureate bard frae Ettrick dale!
Pledge lang and deep wi' three times three
The chief of fairy minstrelsie!

Wi' shepherd plaid o'er shoulder thrown,
Erect, though sixty years have flown!
Gi'e us your hand, and hang your crook
Right here within the organ's nook.

Wi' ruddy cheek, as when of old
Foregathering at the "Noctes'" fold!
And see! that e'e o' dancing glee
Proclaims a "night" that bears the gree.

Kit North, forsooth, or Aytoun there
Will tak' again the honored chair;
Spread wide the board! "Ambrosian" food
Shall grace the bard of Holyrood.

We call wi' pride each storied name—
The sacred bead-roll of our fame;
Come one and all; we'll ha'e a "wake"
To make the old Tron steeple shake.

Don't startle at the Tiler's knock,
You're safe as at St. Mary's Loch—
You mind when first you saw the Light
And gazed upon yon legend bright—

And when we had you "rigged" at last,
Wi' "baubles" all behind you cast,
You said, before the "work" began:
"Noo, mind, lads, I'm a married man."

Dear Jamie Hogg, you couldna said
A funnier thing since you were wed;
Those words throughout all Scotland went—
And Masons wondered what you meant.

But let it pass. The days are lang
Since we have heard the Shepherd's sang;
The richest folds at Altrive yet
Are fleecy clouds in purple set.

Bright, glorious days among the hills!
Thy books a thousand dancing rills!
Brave nights of mirth as genius speels
And "tak's the road" to Tibbie Shiel's;

Where old-time song and jest went round,
And rafters rang with merry sound;
All silent now! Nay! fair and free
Swells forth the Border Minstrelsie.

. . . . . .

So gi'e us a ballad again to-night—
How witches flew o'er the sea-foam white;
Your midnight ride with the "Witch of Fife,"
A buxom dame and a sonsie wife,

Who led her "gudeman" many a mile
To the Bishop's casks of Merry Carlisle;
And left him there until rosy morn
Found him asleep wi' an empty horn.

"A modest tale, by my fay," said North—
"It beats the 'Brig' across the Forth,

On a flying stick to skirl away,
Like comets lost in the morning gray.

It makes one think that the 'Lion' there
Will drink some day of Loch Katrine fair,
Springing away from the solid ground
To the hills of Fife wi' a single bound;

Perchance upborne on loftier flight,
Till yonder Crags are bathed in light,
Or bright Orion's race is run,
We'll join the 'Pilgrims of the Sun.'"

"Well said, Kit North—your wit is fine,
But prithee suggest a shorter line;
If Jamie once gets under way,
He'll never ken the blink o' day.

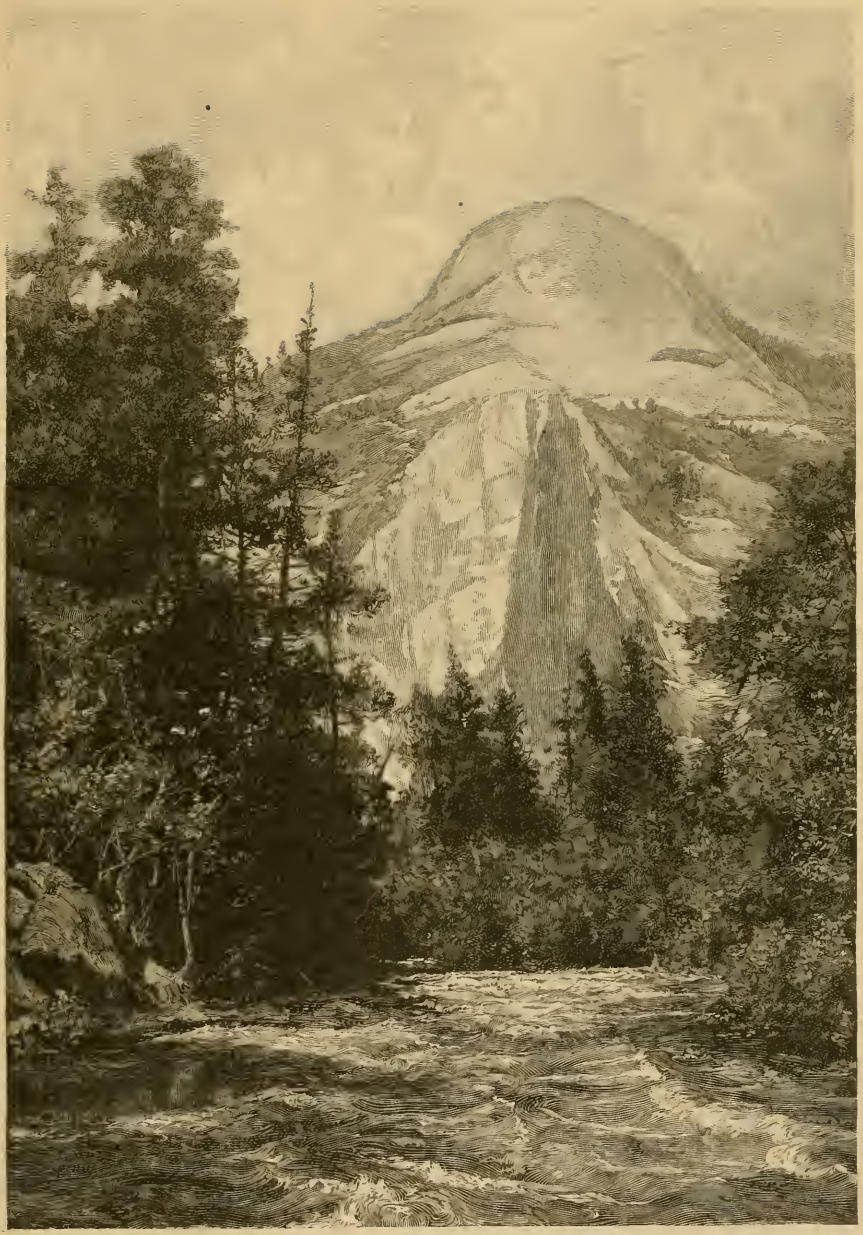
We'll join his 'Pilgrims of the Sun'
When we our mortal race have run"—
Thus Aytoun spoke, and Lockhart smiled
To find the "Sun" securely "tiled."

Then Boswell thought, perchance "Queen Hynde"
Might ha'e a chance to free her mind;
But Willie Hay set all ableeze—
"Too near your trip to the 'Hebrides!'"

All took a part till Jamie turns
Wi' twinkling eye to Robbie Burns:
"Perhaps they want a photograph
That didn't make the 'critics' laugh.

All in 'Poetic Mirror' there,
The very garb they used to wear—
Byron and Wordsworth, Southey, Scott,
At home within a shepherd's cot."

. . . . . .



"O'ER FAR-AWAY MOUNTAINS ITS MUSIC IS BORNE"

"Ay," answered Burns, "but the cot is wide
That shelters the fairies o' Ettrick side—
And grander than castle its 'but and ben,'
Where 'Bonnie Kilmeny gaed up the glen.'

No foot of earth but a standing-place,
Yet the poet's eye has heaven for space,
And a fairy realm where thought is free,
And 'Kilmeny was pure as pure could be.'

And this was her home, and this is thine,
As the years their threads of glory untwine;
For the vale she beheld is the Yarrow still,
And the music she heard the tinkling rill;

And the sky she noted of thousand dyes,
The morning that broke on the Shepherd's eyes;
And the land of 'lakes and mountains gray'
That soft in vision before her lay

Was an open book, where the poet wrought
A wondrous realm, a realm of thought—
A world so pure, with voices clear,
'Kilmeny' and he alone might hear.

Immortal with her the poet dwells
In Ettrick's and Yarrow's dowie dells,
'Till the stars of heaven fall calmly away
Like flakes of snaw on a winter day.'"

. . . . . .

So spake the lad frae bonnie Ayr:
"Kilmeny!" "Kilmeny!" was echoed there,
As the Shepherd rose to the hearty call,
And bound all hearts in loving thrall.

The golden hours are well-nigh flown,
But gi'e us a song that girds every zone,

Each "valley and glen and dell without name"—
"To woo a bonnie lassie when the kye comes hame."

Ay, that is the human, my brother, you see,
"Kilmeny" is sweet, but the "lassie" for me;
Your "Bird of the wilderness," brightest e'er born,
"Blithesome and cumberless," wakens the morn;

Immortal while Yarrow wi' melody wide
Bestows on the Ettrick its silvery tide;
While Ettrick flows free to the Tweed and the sea
That "Skylark" shall wake distant meadow and lea;

O'er far-away mountains its music is borne
To desolate hearts aweary and worn;
To meadows and streams where the wanderer turns
And dreams for a moment of Scotia's burns.

Immortal! Ah, yes, the "Skylark" I know;
Immortal "Kilmeny," with heart pure as snow;
"But teach me," said Kit, "what is dearer than fame—
'To woo a bonnie lassie when the kye comes hame.'"

A brave lesson, Jamie, we know it by heart,
But gi'e us another, for brithers must part;
Ay, teach us but this, for the east is aflame,
To find hearty welcome when we a' get hame.

"AND DREAMS FOR A MOMENT OF SCOTIA'S BURNS"

THE CLASS IVY

(Yale, '67—Twenty-fifth Anniversary)

Committee on ivy in order;
Mr. Chairman, I rise to report:
A sprig of the old Scottish Border
Was sent from Holyrood court,
And we trust that some future recorder
Won't say "Ivy isn't our forte."

For twenty-five years we have waited
And planted and watered anew;
Five times we have met and debated
And pledged it in memory's dew;
And now, as the chairman has stated,
We still have the ivy in view.

Perhaps 'twas the choice of location,
At the corner of Library Hall,
And the ivy had divination
That the structure some day would "fall";
And, wise in its own generation,
Suggested a sunnier wall.

Perhaps the class-history curbed it
That far-away evening in June;
Mayhap the class-singing disturbed it
As the "boys" were not always in tune;
Or else "Sixty-seven" perturbed it—
Carved deep in the stone like a rune.

Whatever the cause, it departed
This life the year it was born,

And the next one was also downhearted—
  Its neighbors laughed it to scorn;
The third one never got started
  We planted Triennial morn.

So the figures alone in their glory
  Wore a sort of an epitaph smile,
As if trying to tell an old story
  That wasn't perhaps worth the while;
While other inscriptions were hoary
  With ivy that grew by the mile.

The years brought on our Sexennial;
  We gathered that corner around,
And hoped by the coming Decennial
  Our ivy at least might be found;
We came—a dry leaf—a perennial
  Just peeped from the desolate ground.

Then the class to a man was united
  That something indeed should be done;
That the ivy at last should be righted,
  For patience finally won—
A committee to victory plighted
  Straightway on its mission begun.

They said that the matter was easy
  If the "clipping" was properly set;
Their general manner was breezy,
  As the job was happily let,
And they laughed till the chairman was wheezy
  At the praise their committee would get.

Ten years went by, and thereafter
  That committee was heavy with care,
And instead of the chairman's laughter
  They sat with disconsolate stare,
And gazed, so to speak, at a rafter,
  As they tried their "Report" to prepare.

And then, perhaps, you remember
  Another committee was made,
And your chairman the following December
  A visit to Tarrytown paid,
Where his hopes grew bright as an ember
  Whereon an old "bellows" has played.

For an editor there was devoted
  To ivy, and knew of a vine
On Sunnyside porch that was noted—
  From Abbotsford over the brine—
To Irving from Scott, and I gloated
  To think how that ivy would twine;

That the Art Building niche would possess it
  And guard it with consecrate pride,
And the sunlight forever caress it
  As it spread in luxuriance wide,
And our grandchildren's children would bless it,
  And the glory of Yale would abide.

He said it would have his attention,
  And I told him my mind was at rest;
That the class had been under a tension
  For years with ivy unblest—
That night a modest class-pension
  Filled the dreams of that editor's guest.

So the days went by vision-haunted,
  And life wore a happier smile,
For the Scott-Irving tendril enchanted
  Was certainly growing in style;
And your chairman, meanwhile, was transplanted
  To the ivy's original isle.

Then one afternoon came a letter
  From "Wild" with a postmark in haste,
That he somehow thought it was better,
  As there wasn't much time to waste,

To wait no more on our debtor
Who planted his "clippings" in paste.

Alas! Had that ivy miscarried?
Was the story the same as before?
I sprang for the stairway, nor tarried
To shut the "Consulate" door;
I found a couple just married
En route to Columbia's shore.

They promised, with tears of emotion,
To transport my ivy with care,
And I wrote to a friend o'er the ocean
To Sunnyside straight to repair;
And I somehow now have a notion,
As to ivy—you're blessed with a pair.

If so, may they grow in affection,
Like the brothers of long, long ago,
Attaining to higher perfection
As the years to eternity flow;
Abiding in love's recollection,
When shadows the light overflow.

TO "STRATHESK"

It did me prood the "roose" you sent
To Scottish friends in guid black prent;
The glowing lines wi' kindness brent
  Illume my desk—
Love, wit, and pathos truly blent
  By "John Strathesk."

I read the tribute o'er and o'er,
Sae hale and hearty to the core,
The loyal wishes that it bore
  Across the sea;
The uttered word—and something more
  That blurs the e'e.

Ay, such the magic of your pen,
I saw the winding Esk again,
Sir Walter's home and quiet glen
  At dear Lasswade,
The resting-place of Hawthornden,
  Where last we strayed.

I stood among the mountain-rills
Of Wanlockhead and fair Leadhills—
Again your speech the gathering thrills
  With worthy pride
For Symington, whose genius fills
  The Lowthers wide.

What joy to breathe the caller air,
To stand with reverent forehead bare
By Allan Ramsay's portal there,
  Whose rich bequest
Invites the world his love to share
  And be his guest.

That ancient library had a "splore"
Of eloquence ne'er heard before,
Wi' loving links from shore to shore
  And Scottish sang;
The Hudson flowed beside the door,
  Or I am wrang.

Full many a tome and antique book
Upon the scene in wonder look;
A folio, hid within a nook,
  His neighbor nudged,
And whispered till old Chaucer shook,
  And Johnson "fudged."

One parchment that had been in pawn
For centuries, faintly seemed to yawn;
A reverend doctor, full of brawn,
  Turned on his bier;
He took it for the Judgment dawn,
  And asked the year.

Chatham and Fox awoke at last,
With trembling limbs and cheeks aghast;
They thought, forsooth, their votes to cast
  On pending bill;
The Speaker said a cyclone passed
  O'er Richmond Hill.

Ah, if those worthies only knew
That we were also of their crew,
Our books, like guests in honored pew,
  On upper shelf,

Perhaps they'd read the preface through,
Ye ken yourself.

But this I know: that summer day,
From morning gold to evening gray,
Within one heart has come to stay
While memory bides;
Those velvet hills where shadows play—
That ride of rides.

A "four-in-hand" that swept the road
From "water-meetings'" sweet abode,
To where the Nith in music flowed;
By many a stream,
All nameless now, but well bestowed
In lingering dream.

I see the kirk with carving old,
With mouldering walls 'mid silent fold,
The crumbling arch, the chancel cold,
Of Durisdeer;
The storied tomb of Douglas bold
Who knew not fear.

How like a vision, yet how real
Those golden hours upon us steal,
With open hearts and hands that seal
Rich friendships fast;
The living shrines where memories kneel
All else outlast.

No pencil-ray of sunlight born,
No bugle-blast of golden horn,
No song of poet can adorn
Or half portray
The glory of that trip from morn
To close of day.

Then take, "Strathesk," my warmest prayer—
Guard Scotland's children everywhere,
Her lads and lasses keep frae care
  For evermore;
And favoring winds the message bear
  To Scotia's shore.

"BY MANY A STREAM"

BRETHREN ALL

AT THE DEDICATION OF THE MASONIC HOME, UTICA

(*Tune*—"*America*")

To brethren hale and free
A line across the sea
    We fondly throw;
A pledge to one and all
Within our hailing-call;
Let love all hearts enthrall,
    And gladness flow!

From out the centuries vast
A ray of hope is cast—
    A beam divine:
May Light that guides our way,
Which craftsmen true obey,
On well-wrought work for aye
    In glory shine!

To shield from pain and care
We build with faith and prayer
    A sure abode;
A refuge from the blast,
When skies are overcast,
And night is falling fast
    Upon life's road.

A Home! Ah, blessèd word!
What memories are stirred!
    God guard it well!

Thy smile upon our task,
Great Architect, we ask,
Till in Thy light we bask,
And ever dwell!

The ashlars that we hew,
And set with plummet true,
Our labor here;
A living Temple grand,
Not reared by human hand,
But by Supreme Command,
Shall there appear.

"TO ANE AND A'"

LODGE CANONGATE KILWINNING, EDINBURGH

(*Tune*—"*Good-night, and joy be with you a'*")

Were distance compassed by a thought,
  Or oceans traversed by a dream,
One certain star of glory wrought
  To-night upon my sight would gleam;
But oh, the severing sea is wide,
  And mony a weary night maun fa'
Ere Frith of Forth or Firth of Clyde
  Shall greet the bard that's far awa'.

Yet what recks love of time or space—
  I sit amang you once again,
Ance more I hear the songs that grace
  The night o' nights, the Lodge o' men;
I know fu' weel the hearty grasp,
  The kindly word frae ane and a';
My dreams no longer shadows clasp—
  The bard is nae sae far awa'.

I hear the storied walls resound
  Wi' ringing words and notes of cheer;
Once more I trace the sacred bound
  Of Burns and Hogg, our Laureates dear;
Again the fond Old Organ thrills
  Wi' memories sweet that gently fa',
And every eye wi' moisture fills
  For brithers near though far awa';

For lovers leal in distant lands
  Wha cherish still the hallowed shrine
To Scotia wed by blended strands—
  A cable-tow of Auld Lang Syne;
But whether near or whether far,
  A health to-night to ane and a';
And here beneath yon central star
  Wha says the bard is far awa'?

TO AN EDINBURGH FRIEND

With a piece of cornice from Victor Hugo's Library

Accept with this a strip of hallowed wood,
A moulding bright from Victor Hugo's wall;
A gilded bit where lingering fancies brood
And burning words, which every heart enthrall.
You gave to me, inset with faithful care,
A tender keep-sake from yon humble room
Of that sad bed which heard Burns' yearning prayer
And crowning verse that pierced the gathering gloom:
No other song to all the world so dear;
Hush! round his couch the sorrowing muses kneel:
"O wert thou in the cauld blast" lingers here—
Those sheltering lines an amulet and seal:
Ah! emblems utter what we cannot speak,
And voice our hearts when words are all too weak.

IN FAITH

The symbols die
Of earth and sky—
  Time's sway is o'er;
His starry seat,
His coursers fleet
  Are seen no more.

Like jewels cast
Aside at last
  And worthless all,
The shining spheres
Dissolved in tears
  In darkness fall.

But though they die
In earth and sky,
  Yet God remains;
The shrivelled scroll
But frees the soul
  From prison chains.

A vapor cloud,
An empty shroud,
  In chaos rides;
But He is sure,
His Words endure,
  And Love abides.

On wings of light
That pierce the night
  To realms of morn,

Reclothed with sense
Of life intense
  We mount reborn.

We know not where—
We wait in prayer
  The opening door;
We know but this:
In Him is bliss
  For evermore.

THE ETERNAL

Eternal Being! Spirit! God Supreme!
  Father of all, revealed to every land,
Where'er Thy starry heavens nightly gleam
  Thy wondrous power all nations understand.
From out the hieroglyphs of yonder sky,
  The golden alphabet of fleeting time,
We pluck vain symbols born to pass and die,
  Held for a moment in a poet's rhyme;
Yet idly futile every human thought
  To solve the mystery of enduring life--
A truth to-day from our conception wrought
  Becomes a target in to-morrow's strife;
    And all things pass; the world a shifting stage:
    Thyself alone unchanged from age to age.

THE HARP OF TOM MOORE

(*At the Scotch-Irish Congress, May, 1889, Columbia, Tenn.*)

The top of the morning to Ireland
And the Scotch-Irish Congress to-day!
All hearts respond at the banquet
When the Harp of Tom Moore leads the way.

The bells of the Shandon are ringing
Their music from over the sea,
But sweeter the Harp of her poet
In the mountains of old Tennessee.

The sons of the Shamrock and Thistle
Still cherish the visions of yore,
And the Harp of old Tara awakens
Again to the voice of Tom Moore;

Each string, with memories sacred,
Is tuned to Liberty's key;
And the songs that float down the ages
Are always the songs of the free.

It sings of the "Exile of Erin,"
But her exiles are exiles no more,
For the Isle of old Erin has drifted
Close under Columbia's shore.

"Where liberty is, is my country"
Has guided her over the way,
And Columbia holds in her borders
The heart of old Ireland to-day.

Manhattan and Plymouth and Jamestown
  Can boast of their heritage true,
But Mecklenburg's fame is immortal
  When we number the stars in the blue;

The Scotch-Irish-Puritan Fathers
  First drafted the words of the free,
And the speech of Virginia's Henry
  Is the crown of Our Liberty's plea.

The sons and the grandsons of heroes
  Who fought for freedom and right
With joy hail the dawn of the morning—
  "Mavourneen!" Awake to the light!

The maidens of Lorne and Killarney
  Are swelling the chorus to-day,
For the castles of Oban and Blarney
  Are only just over the way.

Then welcome, a thrice hearty welcome
  To legendry, lyric, and lore,
With a pledge and "Guid Hielan' welcome"
  To the voice and the harp of Tom Moore;

A toast to the Shamrock and Thistle,
  And sunshine both sides of the sea,
As Erin clasps hands o'er the ocean
  With Columbia in fair Tennessee.

LOOK AT THE MOON, MY SWEETHEART

Look at the moon, my sweetheart,
  Look at the moon with me,
And you will be seeing your darlint,
  And I will be seeing thee;
The same bright moon of Killarney
  The distant Sierras see,
The same round moon up yonder
  Looks down upon you and me.

They say that she is nearest
  Of all the skyey train;
And we will hold her dearest
  Until we meet again;
For many a night, my sweetheart,
  Beneath her kindly gleam,
We strolled by dear Killarney,
  And life was all a dream.

So sweet your faithful letter,
  I know it all by heart;
It says you're coming for me,
  And we nevermore shall part;
Her silver beams will guide you,
  Where'er you chance to be,
As I wait by dear Killarney
  Your coming o'er the sea.

The throb of hope is swifter
  Than morning's golden car,
And the light of love that binds us
  Outshines the evening star;

"BY DEAR KILLARNEY"

The moon on dear Killarney
A ladder rears for me,
Up which the white-winged angels
Shall bear my dreams to thee.

So look at the moon, my sweetheart,
Look at the moon with me,
And you will be seeing your darlint,
And I will be seeing thee;
The same bright moon of Killarney
The distant Sierras see,
The same round moon up yonder
Looks down upon you and me.

A BLARNEY ROMANCE

She was the daintiest maiden
  You ever chanced to meet—
Her cheeks with roses laden,
  Her lips like cherries sweet;
We met at Castle Blarney
  One glorious summer morn—
It chanced at dear Killarney
  That both of us were born.

We found it out soon after,
  And this is how it came:
Her eyes brimful of laughter,
  And brows too sweet to name,
Just set my pulses flying,
  And made me linger near;
I said: "Perhaps you're spying
  The Blarney-stone, my dear."

For upward she was gazing
  Along the castle wall;
"I'll guide you, if it's plazing,
  For sure you're like to fall";
She answered, smiling swately:
  "Then catch me if you can"—
And up the turret nately
  The little fairy ran.

It's awfully provoking
  To take away one's breath,
And then, with laughter choking,
  To say: "You'll be my death."

My heart was all a-flurry,
As, pouting sweetly there:
"To think you wouldn't hurry
And help me up the stair."

The battlement seemed spinning—
Just whirling round and round;
Beneath her smile so winning
I laughed at Cupid's wound;
I looked off on the valley
And tree-tops far below,
And couldn't keep the tally
Of arrows from his bow.

I spied the stone of magic
A fathom down the wall,
And then a distance tragic—
Of thirty more to fall:
An awkward situation—
To hand a friend a "foot,"
And then—through gravitation—
To leave an empty boot.

Half dazed, I heard her saying:
"It seems a trifle sheer,
But if you're me obeying,
I'll kiss the Blarney, dear."
There wasn't time for waiting—
The dainty, smiling elf
Without a word's debating
Went climbing o'er the shelf.

And I was fondly clinging,
As only love can cling,
And she was gently swinging,
As only fairies swing:
She kissed the stone so smiling—
I think I see her now;
She came up so beguiling,
And said: "You do it now."

I heard the bells of Shandon
  Far off upon the Lee;
I said: "There's naught to stand on,
  And who will balance me?"

"AT CASTLE BLARNEY"

I thought 'twould do by proxy,
  If she was well agreed;
She pled that "heterodoxy"
  Was not the Blarney creed.

We argued then the question
  Upon the castle wall;
And held an extra session
  Till twilight 'gan to fall;
Strange people came and vanished,
  And wondered at the pair—
That seemed like tourists banished
  From Cook's or Gaze's care.

My heart, like liquid leaven,
  Was ready then to pour,
And I was nearer Heaven
  Than Pyramus of yore;
The light of love around us
  That glorious summer day
In golden meshes bound us,
  And "Thisbe" came to stay.

And so at Castle Blarney
  We learned each other's name,
And found from old Killarney
  That both in childhood came;
The bells of Shandon clearer
  Upon the evening fell,
Our hearts were drawing nearer,
  Our lips—I must not tell.

The long discussion ended,
  The "proxy" was maintained—
Two souls in rapture blended,
  The Blarney point was gained;
Then down the stairway spiral
  We wound with little haste,
Like lovers of the Tyrol,
  In tenderness encased.

So now, if dear Killarney
  Would see our "likes" again,

We'll send a pair from Blarney—
  Say one of "six" and "ten";
It may be "heterodoxy,"
  But when we're all alone,
I do it still by proxy—
  And kiss the Blarney-stone.

"A MORNING AT GLENGARIFF"

AT GLENGARIFF

Sweet strains abide in music,
  And oft in memory play:—
The rhythm of Glengariff,
  The flow of Bantry Bay.

Some words are like to poems
  With chords that come to stay;
Our hearts embrace Glengariff,
  And cling to Bantry Bay.

They seem to blend together
  As if they knew the way:
'Twas long ago Glengariff
  First smiled on Bantry Bay.

Then coyly glanced in beauty
  Bedecked with pearly spray:—
The bridal-robed Glengariff
  Beloved by Bantry Bay.

And so some poet wed them
  To live in song for aye:—
The wooing of Glengariff,
  The joy of Bantry Bay.

A honeymoon of beauty,
  An Eden every day,
A morning at Glengariff,
  A night on Bantry Bay.

POMPEII AT EVENING

City entombed and sadly desolate,
What echoes haunt thy resurrected walls!
Strange phantoms flit of that remorseless date
When lurid night engulfed thy stately halls.
We cross thy porch, and by a single bound
Span the wide chasm of two thousand years;
We trace the life, and almost hear the sound
Of joy and laughter hushed by sudden fears:
And now, as evening falls, fond lovers stray
And dream the same old dreams thy daughters knew,
While fancy broods and silent shadows play
Round crumbling columns dank with mouldering dew.
Such eyes light Eden-land where'er they be,
And make, Pompeii, Paradise of thee!

"AND MAKE, POMPEII, PARADISE OF THEE"

THE TRAFALGAR LION

Perhaps you remember the lion there,
Some years ago in Trafalgar Square;
A sturdy lion, sound and hale,
That never once had wagged his tail:
Above Northumberland House it sate,
And mounted guard in solemn state.

A humorous traveller came one day,
And stopped, in wonder, across the way,
Looking up, with astonished air,
At the royal beast in his lofty lair:
In a minute or two a dozen or more
Halted to pluck the mystery's core.

Till straightway assembled an anxious crowd,
And the traveller finally muttered aloud:
"I see; it wags its tail." All stared;—
The gathering mass the wonder shared:
The stranger watched his chance to go,
But dropped around in an hour or so—

To find a wild and angry throng,
Pushing and jostling, ten thousand strong,
In one concentrated upward stare:
"It does," "It doesn't" fill the air;
Policemen rally and shout in vain—
Their "billets" fall like summer rain:

"Fix bayonets!" The soldiery stand
Obedient to the stern command.

The mass dispersed. The tale went round:
The "wag" was there, but never found.
Pick out the moral as you may—
The crowd is ready any day.

THE DEMORALIZED POET

(À la Sennacherib)

The poet came down with his sonnets unrolled,
And cheek more superb than the gay marigold;
While the glance of his eye was as brilliant to see
As the Tarrytown beacon on old Tappan Zee.

As genial and breezy as spring-time he came,
With forehead all bared for the garland of fame;
As solemn and sad as an equinox day
The glow on his visage soon faded away.

For the editor breathed on his manuscript there,
And withered the daffodils comely and fair;
Till his vision of laurels grew pale as the ghost
Of a yesterday's fog on the New Jersey coast.

And there lay the ballad by fancy devised
On the table before him, neglected, despised,
Every figure discarded that ecstasy wrought,
With pearls from the depths of profundity brought.

And there sat the poet with dull, vacant stare
As the kinks and the curls straightened out of his hair;
Till the heart that once gushed with deep anguish was wrung
For his sonnets unprinted, his lyrics unsung.

And far-distant maidens are loud in their wail,
As their minstrel returns, all shattered and pale;
Yet, deep in their hearts, for all their ado,
They wish a waste-basket might swallow him too.

TO THE SCOTCH-IRISH CONGRESS

ATLANTA

(*With a Sprig of White Heather—May* 7, 1892)

A BIT of bonnie white heather,
  And greetings, Atlanta, to thee!
Where the Scotch-Irish Congress forgather
  To-day in the land of the free.

From the heart of old Scotia's mountains
  It speaks of your fathers and mine,
With a "health" to Georgia's clear fountains
  And dew from the land of the pine.

Though the blossom that speeds as a token
  May wither and fade by the way;
Love's white-wingèd whisper once spoken
  Floats wide and endureth for aye.

As the pollen-dust seeks the fair petal
  Of roses on meadow and lea,
So a strain of the old Gaelic mettle
  May wander in music to thee.

PAGANINI'S VIOLIN

PRESERVED IN THE PALAZZO DEL MUNICIPIO, GENOA

Ay, give the bow again to faltering hand,
And place the violin against his breast;
As loving friends in sorrowing silence stand
And faintly hear the master's last request.
In rapture fond behold the swelling tide
Sweeps from his heart along the trembling strings,
As if to greet the heavenly arches wide
With chords of joy upborne on angels' wings.
No farewell vision in the world so dear,
Or dying transport fraught with wond'rous power;
That sky-lark note from out the welkin clear
Becomes, fair Genoa, thy richest dower.
Guard well the sacred strings and silent frame,—
Sweet cenotaph of Paganini's fame.

DREAMLAND AND LOVELAND

Near our dreamland lies a loveland,
  Ever fresh and fair with flowers;
We can see it from our dreamland—
  Soon the loveland will be ours.

There's a cottage in that loveland
  Porch-embowered with trellised vine;
Sweet the vision from our dreamland—
  Round its windows roses twine.

Lead me gently through the dreamland,
  That I may no longer roam;
Guide me safely to the loveland—
  For I long to rest at home.

Where the breath of tender blessing
  Sweetens duty bravely done;
Care beguiled by fond caressing—
  Dreamland, Loveland—all in one.

SO SWEET THE DREAMS

So sweet the dreams that speak of thee,
  Fain would I slumber all the while—
  At rest within thy gentle smile,
Where love is all the world to me.

A blissful realm wherein we learn
  Fond lessons life can never teach;
  For dreams are but the thoughts that reach
From earth to heaven and then return;

Bright angel-ladders that uprear
  Their summits to the shining stars,
  Adown whose rounds of silver bars
Float footsteps from the silent sphere.

Kind spirits guard us as we sleep,
  And guide us through each coming day,
  And teach us, Father, how to pray,
And pure and true our souls to keep.

SMILE AND WAIT

Would to-day were now to-morrow,
And to-morrow yesterday—
Three days folded up together,
In Time's basket laid away;

For there's one that waits my coming,
Under fair and sunny skies,
And I'm yearning for the sunlight
Of her sweet and loving eyes.

Change the hour-glass into minutes!
Let the white sands swiftly glide,
Till our hands are clasped together,
And our hearts beat side by side.

Let bright birds convey the message
To the blossoms of the South,
And love's light-winged gentle breezes
Waft my kisses to her mouth.

Haste sweet dreams on rays of moonlight,
Whisper gently—smile and wait,
Till the hours and days are counted
When I'll meet her at the gate.

OF AGE

(1866–1887)

The stars are fading in the gray,
  Faint rosy light proclaims the morn.
Awake, my love, for love to-day
  Recalls the hour our love was born.
How like a dream where memories play
  Since winsome lips were fondly kissed,
So swift the seasons glide away
  When loving hearts keep faithful tryst:
And yet the figures on life's page,
  From Sixty-six to Eighty-seven,
Declare our love is now of age—
  Just twenty-one—since Home and Heaven
    Were twinned within those loving eyes
    Which led my soul to Paradise.

LOVE'S LITANY

Sweet the rose on flowery lea,
Sweet the sunlight on the sea,
Sweeter still your glance to me—
I love you.

Fonder than when evening lies
In the lap of summer skies
Is the language of your eyes—
I love you.

Bright the voice of ruddy morn
Answering to the bugle-horn,
Brighter still since you were born—
I love you.

Dear the love-songs of the past,
Dear the dreams of love that last,
All "Love's Litany" thou hast—
I love you.

IN WHISPERS

A song came floating from out the sky;
When asked to stay, it answered, "Why?"

"A New-Year verse for one most fair,"
I spake with joy. It answered, "Where?"

I whispered low. The song sped by—
"Not sweet enough for her am I;"

"An angel voice I'll go and get."
The poet sighed, and waiteth yet.

THE CENTURY'S SONG

One note from out the centuries vast,
  Which he who lists to-day may hear;
One word on Judah's waters cast,
  With widening circle year by year;
    One song that thrills the patriot van—
    The crowning brotherhood of man.

'Twas this the peasant poet sung,
  By bonnie Doon and winding Ayr,
To that dear harp by Coila strung,
  Whose music floats prophetic prayer—
    A choral link from shore to shore,
    Of man to man the world o'er.

No grander utterance—"Man to man!"
  Behold the Century's living voice!
Those simple words the ages span;
  The nations listen and rejoice;
    The Ploughman bard of Scottish blood
    Proclaims the song of brotherhood.

Our fathers struggled to be free—
  We have the freedom that they wrought;
For lofty faith and liberty
  Brave martyrs died and heroes fought—
    "Nemo Impune" sternly sealed
    On many a fierce and bloody field.

We know by heart each hallowed name,
  Each rugged pass by valor trod,

"THROUGH YONDER CLOUDS BEHOLD THE RIFT"

The Bannockburns baptized to fame
By men who spurned the tyrant's rod;
Who scorned to wear a conqueror's chain,
Who knew their rights and dared maintain.

As men who climb a mountain height
By tortuous path and slippery steep,
O'ertaken by the darkling night
And driving blasts that round them sweep,
Behold with joy the purpling morn,
And wake the crags with bugle-horn;

So up the slope through rack and mist
Proud Scotland holds her steadfast way
To granite peaks by sunlight kissed,
While drifting clouds below her lay;
No pioneer more bold and true
Beneath the heaven's arching blue.

Till now from heights securely reached,
With freedom sown in every soil,
And wasteful war's red banner bleached
On sunlit fields of honest toil,
Hark to the strain: "All war shall cease"—
St. Andrew's song of love and peace.

The charity that knows no bound
Is freedom's gift to every land;
The richest gold in quarry found
Or fairest pearl on ocean strand
Is naught to Saxon freedom now—
The noblest crown on human brow.

And Saxon brotherhood to-day
Means brotherhood all round the world;
No restless realm would dare gainsay
The edict of their flags unfurled;
A million soldiers useless then
Amid the Parliament of men.

Through yonder clouds behold the rift—
  The hour is ripe, the morn is nigh,
The darkness fades, the nations lift
  Their foreheads to a fairer sky;
    Above the Twentieth Century's door—
    "The nations shall learn war no more."

O fairest Queen! whose smiles entrance—
  Columbia! born of noble sires,
With youthful vigor in thy glance,
  And hope that every land inspires,
    Thy mountain chains and rivers free
    Proclaim thy power from sea to sea.

Thine be that power to guard and bless
  The millions vast who toil and wait,
Till man no longer shall oppress,
  But Justice rule at every gate:
    One law, one love, one crowning good—
    The Century's song of brotherhood.

THE HOMESTEAD WELL

Again beside the Homestead Well,
And moss-grown bucket 'neath the trees,
With trickling drops that, bead-like, tell
My prayers unto the passing breeze;
I hear them pattering one by one
In purling music as of old,
When blithely rose the morning sun
And sprinkled hill and dale with gold.

I gaze upon the threshold there,
The doorway that my mother knew—
A happy group of faces fair
Refills the frame of antique hue;

"THE MEADOW-WALK IS STILL THE SAME"

The sloping roof seems nearer now,
  Endeared by dreams that reached the skies,
Fond memories gather as I bow
  And greet the past with moistened eyes.

The meadow-walk is still the same,
  Familiar flowers befringe the path;
They seem to speak my sister's name
  In childhood's golden aftermath;
The gray rail-fence has been replaced,
  But in the picture that I see
The coloring is not effaced—
  It all remains the same to me.

Again the orchard ladders lean
  Against the trees of long ago,
While eager hands the fruitage glean—
  Bright "gilly-flowers" of ruddy glow,
Round "rattle-apples," plump and red,
  To which I listened when a boy—
Ah, even then was sweetness wed
  To beauty in a fleeting joy.

Yon quiet lane where once I strayed
  Invites me to the wooded crest,
Through fields and meadows where I played
  With nature as a welcome guest;
I see the open bars again,
  Near which the flock was wont to sleep,
And years roll back as up the glen
  I hear the scurrying of the sheep.

Ah, far-off pictures! gazing still
  Into the magic mirror here,
I dream of mead and rippling rill,
  Yet find the Homestead Well most dear;
Its swinging bucket fondly glows,
  A swaying pendulum of light,
A happy horologe that throws
  No shadow on its dial bright.

"AGAIN THE ORCHARD LADDERS LEAN"

But wider visions meet my gaze—
I trace the glorious Hudson now,
Her lofty crags and crystal bays,
Whose beauty crowns Columbia's brow;
I muse beside the Northern lakes
Where braided streams in music flow—
Again o'er far Sierra breaks
The morn to tint her peaks of snow.

I dwell amid Edina's towers,
And wander down the banks of Ayr,
By winding Avon gather flowers,
Westminster's proudest trophies share;
I tread old Haarlem's stately halls,
And float upon the Zuyder-Zee—
Along the Rhine, whose ivied walls
And vine-clad hills breathe liberty.

O wayside wanderer! Yonder sky,
  Reflected here in mirror true,
No rival knows, though far and nigh
  Thy feet have brushed the morning dew;
But something in this liquid light
  Recalls those dear Parisian days,
Riviera's noontide clear and white,
  Mentóne's cliff and sunlit bays.

Sweet Naples, terraced to the sky,
  Milano's poem hung in air,
Ravenna's gates that time defy,
  Verona dear and Florence fair;
Proud Venice, holding once the key
  Of commerce as it journeyed west,
The "swan-like" city of the sea,
  Asleep upon a tideless breast.

Como! of mountain lakes the queen!
  Lucerne the king! Behold them now!
I see her crown of emerald green,
  The glacier diamonds on his brow!
Geneva! guardian of the brave,
  Where exiled freedom found a home;
And there above the Cæsar's grave
  In glory still—eternal Rome.

How wide the circle sweeps away
  From this fond centre of the heart,
From meadows green to cities gray,
  From waving fields to crowded mart;
Like weary doves our thoughts return
  Again unto the homestead ark—
Across the wastes our spirits yearn
  Ere twilight slips into the dark.

Dear Homestead Well, thy mirror fair,
  Deep-set within its stony frame,
Reflects the joy, illumes the care,
  The weary steps by which we came:

The mountain trails that seemed so steep
No mortal foot might find its way,
Where faith and lofty genius keep
Their star-lit journey to the day.

O far-off, tranquil, peaceful days,
Ere life becomes a hurrying stream,
While yet the gentle brooklet plays
And to the pebbles sings its dream;
These later scenes cannot replace
The pictures that I know full well,
And in my inmost heart I trace
What youth and love alone can tell.

O colors born of morning dew
That canvas never yet has seen;
No other skies are half so blue,
No other meadows half so green;

"BESIDE THE NORTHERN LAKES"

I hold and keep in memory dear
  The days and dreams that would not stay,
The summer days then seemed a year,
  And now the years seem but a day.

So here, entranced in gentle spell,
  I wait again with trusting heart
To let the magic mirror tell
  The story that it would impart;
For not alone in retrospect,
  But faithful yet to loving eye,
Its crystal waters still reflect
  The sunlight of a cloudless sky.

THE GLOAMING

A wish at close of day,
The evening waits;
A hope, a morning ray
From eastern gates:

A bright and sunny spot
Along the stream;
A quiet sheltered grot
Where we can dream:

A window looking west
Towards sunset gold,
Bespeaking gentle rest
When we are old:

A glow in yonder sky
When shadows creep,
And love's soft lullaby
Inviteth sleep:

A hand to clasp in ours
With pressure dear;
And then—some simple flowers
With friendships near:

A good-night gloaming kiss,
Life's day complete;
A lingering hour of bliss
Where twilights meet.

LIFE'S PAUSES

A curious stranger environed in doubt,
An interrogation-point toddling about,
A bundle of questions—nothing more—
Cooing and creeping upon the floor.

A comma of sunshine, a playtime to see
The flower, the bird, the brook, and the tree;
A vision of childhood—count one for the pause—
A ripple of laughter, a golden clause.

A stile in the pathway, a summer day,
A blissful moment too sweet to stay;
Swift semicolon of youth divine—
Count two in tracing the raptured line.

An exclamation—"You! O You!"
The same old story, forever new,
An arrow's flight to a soul new-found,
A volume of love in a vowel-sound.

A song, a prayer, a marriage vow,
A compound word in the chapter now,
Only a hyphen, but angels wait
And hush their anthem in heaven's gate.

A gleam of light in the gliding years,
A colon of joy in the font appears,
A point of hope in the fleeting text—
Our line continued in the next.

The sentence finished, a gentle mound
By waving grass encircled round;
A period here, but not complete—
Merely a rest for weary feet.

A rest for the night till the morning wakes,
Till the purpling east in glory breaks;
Faith writes a dash for the great TO-BE—
Beyond Time's bracket—Eternity.

THE END

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BY

WALLACE BRUCE

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